

# FIGHT RACISM! FIGHT IMPERIALISM!

Revolutionary Communist Group

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## SELF DEFENCE



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# NO OFFENCE



# Capitalist Britain: deeply entrenched racism

**The unanimous feigned indignation and outrage of the main political parties at the by-election victory of the British National Party (BNP) in the east London borough of Tower Hamlets is no accident. The victory of an openly racist party not only brings to the surface the deeply entrenched racism of British society but also threatens to create determined resistance, led by the most oppressed sections of the working class.**

Racism is the form that national oppression takes in an imperialist country. So it is no surprise that all the main political parties, Tory, Labour and Liberal-Democrat, as steadfast defenders of British imperialist interests abroad, should have consistently promoted and supported racist legislation at home. Yet Major can say of BNP racism that 'there is no place in our society for those sort of policies'; Ashdown can state that 'this is very, very bad news for all those who are committed to democratic politics'; and the Labour Party can indignantly accuse the Tower Hamlets Liberal-Democrats and Conservative Party of 'pandering to racism'. In reality they all pander to racism as any cursory look at their policies shows.

In 1968 the Labour Party rushed through parliament in three days the racist Commonwealth Immigration Act which limited immigration to those who had 'substantial connection' with Britain (at least one grandparent born in the UK). Its immediate purpose was to exclude persecuted Kenyan Asians who had the right of British citizenship at the time. Powell's infamous 'Rivers of Blood' speech and a march on Westminster by East End dockers in his support heightened Labour's panic. Labour Home Secretary Callaghan said at the time:

'I very much regret that it is not possible for this country to absorb these persons, to whom we have given the most solemn pledges, at a pace. If we did, I fear it would cause racial disharmony and explosions'.

The Labour Party has been 'pandering to racism' ever since, enacting and supporting ever harsher immigration controls.

In 1978 Thatcher talking of the prospect of four million Britons of 'new Commonwealth' origins by the year 2000, said: 'Now that is an awful lot and I think it means people are rather afraid that this country might be rather swamped by people of a different culture'.

These comments from the Labour and Tory parties are no different in substance to the arguments used by the Liberal-Democrats to justify the racist policies contained in their manifesto for the Tower Hamlets by-election. Their manifesto stated that it was: 'Putting sons, daughters

and grandparents ... first when it comes to housing priorities.' And it would 'Reduce allocation of flats to the homeless'. That is, it would give priority to whites and exclude incoming immigrants. A local Liberal-Democrat spokesperson justified this by saying: 'It is no coincidence that people have voted for the BNP. They are thoroughly pissed off with local government'. When asked if this referred to an 'influx of Asian families and the distribution of housing', he answered 'yes'.

After the by-election the



What frightens the racist British state is not the BNP but organised resistance to it

local Conservative Party distributed leaflets accusing the council of 'ethnic cleansing' and preventing children of 'white UK tenants' from being allocated local public housing. All this differs little in substance from the statement of the BNP councillor Beackon after the election result that: 'The British are no longer prepared to be treated as second-rate citizens in their own country'.

All the political parties justify their racist policies on the grounds of avoiding 'racial disharmony'. In reality, this means the perpetuation of institutionalised racism. As British capitalism has moved from 'boom' to crisis and from crisis to recession, cuts in social welfare, unemployment and poverty face ever greater sections of the working class, including those previously having relatively privileged conditions compared to immigrant workers. Such sections can easily turn to racism. In order to reduce the loss of their votes to openly racist organisations, all the main political parties have made concessions to this racism. This is precisely what has happened in Tower Hamlets.

However, the victory of the BNP, at this stage, has created very difficult problems for the main ruling class parties. The victory of an openly racist party which has little concern for bourgeois parliamentary norms threatens to create an equally determined non-parliamentary opposition, led by black working class youth. Such an opposition could lay the basis for real resistance to British state racism, its racist institutions and its racist police and legal system. Hence the immediate outrage from the leaders of the main political parties at the victory of the British National Party.

The Isle of Dogs at the centre of the Millwall ward, where the by-election took place, dramatically expresses the real obscenity of a decaying and parasitic British capitalist system. Until the 1970s the London docks provided well-paid employment for thousands of working class men and their families in the area.

When the docks closed the Thatcher government in 1982 set up The London Docklands Development Corporation (LDDC) with a £10bn budget to transform the area in conjunction with private capital. Inevitably, as one local resident put it in a letter to a newspaper: 'The LDDC has allowed a ghetto of wealth to arrogantly flourish beside a ghetto of poverty and poor housing'.

The 1990s recession has left acres of empty office space dominated by Canary Wharf and thousands of luxury houses, nearly 1,000 still empty, towering over run-down council housing estates. This has created among the indigenous working class, already badly hit by the closures of the docks in the 1970s and forced for many years to live next to a noisy, dirty building site, a frustration and desperation, which the BNP, in the absence of a mass anti-racist working class party, has had a clear run to exploit.

The BNP victory followed soon after a vicious racist attack on Qudus Ali in nearby Commercial Road. A protest rally two days later, outside the London Hospital where Qudus Ali was fighting for his life in intensive care, was attacked by the police. The youth fought back against the repeated attacks by the police riot squads (see report p16). It is that fighting spirit and anger, which the black youth will bring to a future movement against the racist British state and the neo-fascist parties like the BNP, that the main political parties fear and are determined to prevent.

As in the 1980s every effort will be made to prevent such a movement emerging. 'Moderate' community leaders and black Labour MPs will be encouraged to put themselves at the head of such a movement to divert it into harmless channels. This is already happening in Tower Hamlets (see p16). At the same time those taking to the streets and organising a real fight against the racists and neo-fascists will find themselves facing the official forces of state racism, the British police backed by its well-equipped riot squads.

But no one can deny that the events of the last few weeks in the East End of London demonstrate once again that a militant working class movement will eventually emerge, led by the oppressed working class and its organisations, out of the disastrous social conditions which capitalism inevitably creates.

## News..... Justice for Joy Gardner

JENNY SUTTON

**At dawn on 28 July, Joy Gardner, a 40-year-old black woman, was brutally attacked by six police and immigration officers who burst into her home to enforce a deportation order. In front of her five-year-old son she was bound and manacled, her mouth and nose sealed with adhesive tape. She died of suffocation.**

For her murderers this was a routine deportation of a black immigrant: routine barbarism. Since Joy's death details have emerged of others who received exactly the same treatment. On 9 July Dorothy Nwokedi was deported with her four-year-old daughter following a dawn raid on her home. She was handcuffed, gagged, sat on and her thumbs were broken. She was not allowed to contact her 10-year-old daughter who was left behind. These cases are the tip of an iceberg. The racist state has even used 'unlicensed' private firms to do their dirty work.

The right wing applauded the police treatment of Joy Gardner. Teresa Gorman MP remarked: 'She has been bumming on the Social Services for five years ... she has cost the taxpayer an enormous amount ... if she had gone quietly none of this would have happened.' When will the likes of Norman Lamont, who secretly received thousands of taxpayers' pounds to evict a tenant, be subject to dawn raids and the death penalty? In racist Britain such treatment is reserved for black people.

Joy Gardner's family have played the leading role in the campaign for justice for Joy's murderers. If the campaign is allowed to go forward in opposition to British state racism then we can put an end to these death squads who victimise the most vulnerable and oppressed.

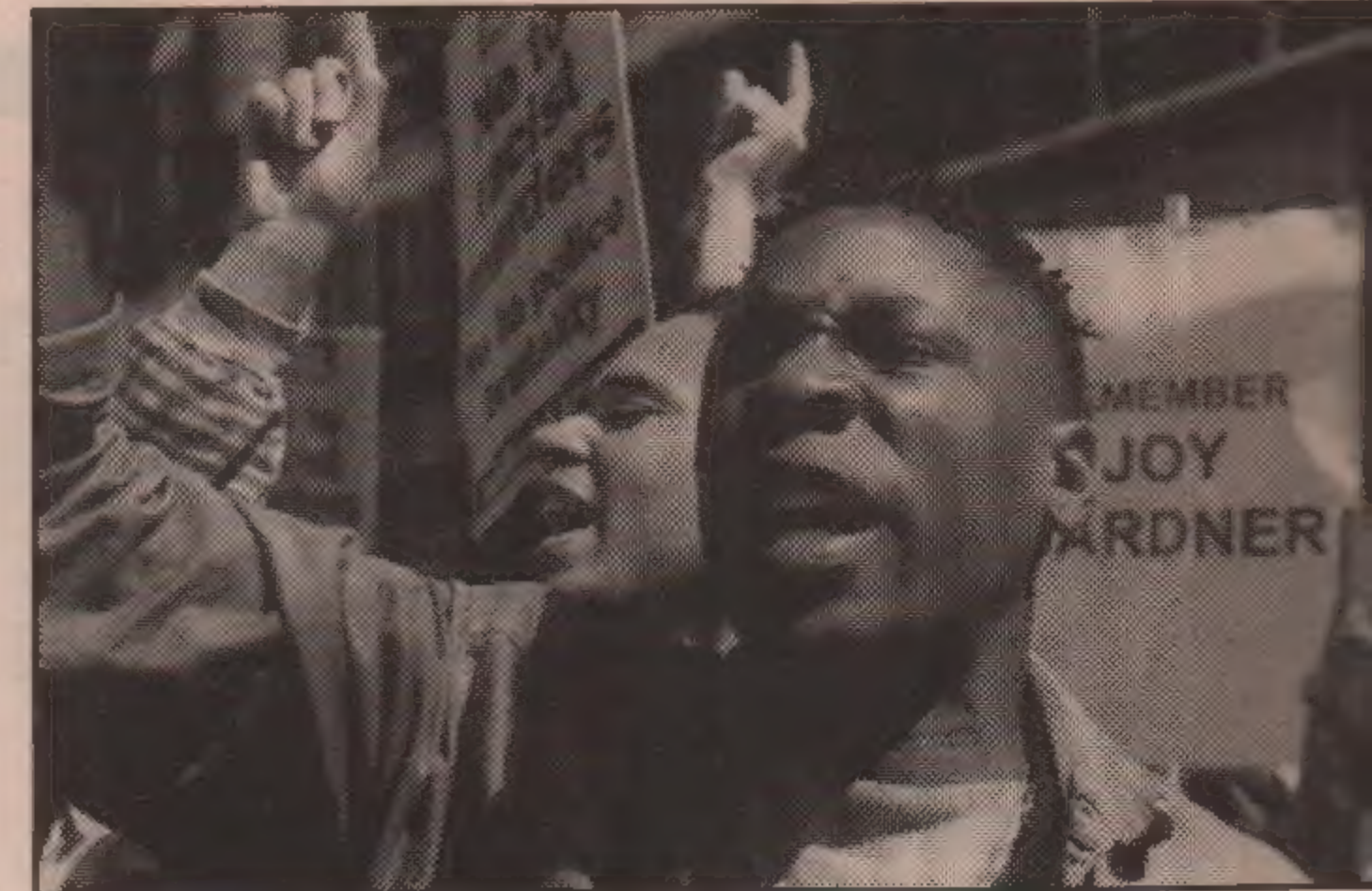
But, from the moment the details of the murder emerged, great efforts were made to avert any fightback. Haunted by the

spectre of 1985, when the shooting of Cherry Groce and the death of Cynthia Jarrett sparked uprisings in Brixton and Tottenham, the efforts of the Metropolitan Police Commissioner, Paul Condon and local MP, Bernie Grant ensured that the justified anger was dissipated.

With masterly footwork, Condon disarmed Grant by implementing the main demand of the 'Joy Gardner Campaign' even before it had been put to

police service, and to have policing by consent, and with support from the community. And that's why to some extent we were a bit flummoxed. We were taken aback because, for the first time ever, here's somebody who agrees with what you're saying!' (*The Guardian* 16 August).

In a twist of irony, Condon's method of co-opting Grant, was used by Grant to co-opt the SWP to the Joy Gardner Campaign.



Angry demonstrators protest against the murder of Joy Gardner

him. The Met's specialist 'Extradition Squad' and the three police officers involved were suspended. Condon feigned ignorance of the methods used by the squad, pressing the Home Office to conduct a joint review of police involvement with deportations.

The day after Joy Gardner's death, Grant called a press conference to appeal for calm, stating: 'We don't want any violence. We don't want any disturbance whatsoever.' He was rewarded with an invitation to meet Condon. 'The idea of Bernie meeting the Commissioner would have been a joke five years ago', said one of Grant's staff. Acceptance at last!

Duly grateful for the privilege, Grant reported: 'The Metropolitan Police Commissioner is a totally different person than the previous ones to my mind ... He seems to be genuinely keen to turn the police force into a

'We didn't want the SWP to take over the issue, so we invited them in ... we thought it was best that the SWP were in, so we had some opportunity of controlling what they did.' Observers of the Campaign's rallies would have seen the SWP, duly grateful in turn for its inclusion, not transforming anger into riots, but swiftly winding down at the first sniff of a fightback. Big fleas and little fleas ...

The fightback against racism will not come from this circus. Joy Gardner's murder will not be avenged by peace, quiet and the consensual policing which kills black people. Labour has never opposed racism - it is responsible for enacting immigration laws which oppress black immigrants. And hanging on to the coat-tails of Labour will only lead the SWP up Bernie Grant's backside - that ought to have been the lesson of Broadwater Farm 1985.

## Orville Blackwood - cover-up

NICKI JAMESON

**The Special Hospitals Service Authority recently published its internal report into the deaths in Broadmoor of Orville Blackwood in 1991 and two other black men in 1984 and 1988. Orville's mother, Clara Buckley, condemned the report as a cover-up and called for a public inquiry, saying 'My son died at the hands of staff at Broadmoor and no one has ever been disciplined for it.'**

The day Orville died he told a charge 'nurse' he wanted to go to his room, rather than to a therapy session. The staff reaction was to put him in solitary confinement. Orville went peacefully, taking the books he had planned to read in his room.

After several hours a doctor and five to seven 'nurses' went to 'check his condition', entering without warning, holding him down and administering a large and, as it turned out, lethal dose of the drugs Sparine and

Modectate. They then left the cell. Orville died almost immediately. It is clear that Orville Blackwood, just like Michael Martin and Joseph Watts before him, was murdered.

None of the individuals who carried out the murder have been charged or even disciplined. The 'hospital' is free to ignore even the recommendations in this report. And the system responsible survives intact and virtually unchallenged. 'Special hospitals' are prisons, not hospitals; they are staffed by prison officers, and they are subject to even less public scrutiny and accountability than other penal establishments.

Fifteen per cent of Broadmoor's 'patients' are Afro-Caribbean. Second generation Afro-Caribbean men admitted to mental hospitals are up to 29 times more likely to be diagnosed schizophrenic than their white counterparts and far more likely to be treated with high doses of drugs, instead of counselling or therapy. Reluctantly, the inquiry admits: 'There ex-



ists a subtle, unconscious on the whole, but nevertheless effective form of organisational racism.' 'Ethnic minority patients ... are terrified that the authorities are "killing them off".' And implicitly, they admit Broadmoor is staffed by bigoted, ignorant thugs: '[The] closed, inbred community of nurses, some from a military-type background, has little understanding of the need and cultural differences of ethnic minority patients.'

As if further proof were needed, when the inquiry team visited Broadmoor two months after Orville's death, they found the patient list disfigured: Orville's name had been crossed out and next to it a 'nurse' had written RIP and drawn a cartoon of Orville the Duck.



## Save our hospitals! Union calls off UCH strike



HANNAH CALLER

As we go to press, the strike and occupation at University College Hospital (UCH) in London have just been called off because the hospital workers' union, Unison, withdraw its support. Without union backing the strikers felt they would be unable to continue. As the National Health Service is dismantled around us, the unions are simply refusing to fight.

The background to the UCH strike and occupation is the 1992 Tomlinson Report which recommended the closure of many London hospitals on the spurious grounds that the capital is 'over-provided with expensive beds'. London has fewer than 20,000 beds for approximately seven million people; one quarter of beds have been lost since 1982; more than 1 in 50 Londoners are on hospital waiting lists, and the queues are growing.

In the face of widespread protest some hospitals are being merged rather than closed, but the effect amounts to closure since there is no doubling of services. This has been the case for UCH and the Middlesex Hospital merger. Alongside this the local health authority has withdrawn its contract, stopping all non-emergency treatment until April 1994. Under pressure from government cuts, the health authority has been forced to look for ways to restrict and

cheapen treatments. Almost 1,400 people are on the waiting list at UCH. NHS managers are now deciding to sack between 30-50 consultants in order to reduce the hospital's deficit.

The strike and occupation started on 17 August in order to prevent hospital wards closing and equipment being dismantled. Immediately the secretive and underhand transfer of patients to the Middlesex Hospital began. Ambulance crews and porters refused to co-operate with this strike-breaking, so managers themselves moved patients via underground tunnels below UCH to waiting taxis in adjacent streets. Post-operative patients have had to walk along corridors, and relatives were not informed of the moves.

A nurse, Unison representative and member of the strike committee told FRFI, before the strike collapsed, that Unison headquarters were doing very little: 'Of 16 Unison offices we visited before the day of action on 16 September, none had been informed about it by Unison headquarters.' Unison are very good in words and on leaflets, but are holding back the struggle both locally and nationally. All the workers we spoke to reiterated that the strikers must take the campaign into their own hands.

There is a wider struggle to be fought. Bart's Hospital is now being destroyed and fragmented under the guise of a merger with the London Hospital. Bart's patients are supposed to be

redirected to the Homerton or the London Hospital, but the Homerton is closing wards and the London has to make room for specialist Bart's units. Emergency patients are supposed to go to UCH or St Thomas's, both of which are set to close.

The Tomlinson Report recommended the closure of 11 hospitals and Virginia Bottomley has added other specialist hospitals to the list, including Harefield and the Royal Marsden. Elsewhere, Barnet General is closing its Accident & Emergency department and 100 beds; the Royal Free is cutting jobs in Pathology and the North Middlesex is sacking nurses and downgrading jobs.

This savage attack is not confined to London. In Sheffield cuts will result in only one Accident & Emergency department for the whole city. Newcastle is set to lose its General Hospital and 1,000 beds will go in Glasgow.

In the last three years, 8,000 nursing jobs have disappeared. Newly qualified nurses are without jobs while wards are dangerously understaffed. During the same period 17,000 managers have been recruited on high pay.

In the face of this, Unison's sell-out at UCH is criminal treachery. They have given up the fight against a wholesale dismantling of NHS services. Health workers will have to learn the lessons of this duplicity and take the struggle into their own hands.

## From bad to worse – abolition of the Wages Councils

GAVIN SCOTT

On 30 August 1993 the British government abolished the last 26 wages councils making this the only country in the EC without any legally enforced minimum wage. The councils had set minimum rates of pay for nearly 2.5 million workers, 95 per cent of them working in the hotel and catering, retailing, clothing and hair-dressing sectors.

The basic minimum rates set in these areas were between £2.66 and £3.30 an hour, or £106.40 to £132 for a 40-hour week. In fact two-thirds of workers covered were part-timers, 80 per cent of them were women and one million black and Asian workers. Women working in full-time manual jobs in council-covered industries earned on average 81.3 per cent of the gross hourly earnings of the men, 10 percentage points higher than women in all industries.

The wages councils system had many faults. Minimum rates for workers under 21 years of age were removed in the mid-1980s. Since 1979, the Wages Inspectorate, which monitors pay rates and deals with cases against employers throughout around 400,000 workplaces, has been cut from 177 to only 40 civil servants. In 1991, about half of all part-timers and a quarter of all full-timers covered by the councils were paid below the minimum hourly rate, and one in five shopwork-

ers was paid illegally low wages.

The Department of Employment defended the abolition by saying: 'The system imposes a burden of bureaucracy on employers, distorts the labour market and destroys jobs.' It is highly interesting therefore



that, in May, the British Government, through its Department of Trade and Industry, set up a special 'Invest in Britain' office in Germany.

This extra 'burden of bureaucracy' launched a campaign to persuade more manufacturers to relocate to this country. It ran advertisements in newspapers pointing out its lower corporate taxes of only 33 per cent compared to 50 per cent, and claimed labour costs are 78 per cent lower than Germany's. At the beginning of this year the

Hoover Company relocated its Dijon, France production to Cambuslang, Strathclyde with a net loss of 300 jobs and poorer pay and conditions for the new workforce. John Major said the time: 'They can keep their Social Chapter, and we will have the jobs'. One of the DTI's blatant attempts to 'distort the labour market and destroy jobs' in Germany claimed that 1,000 firms have moved to Britain to take advantage of the low wages.

The abolition of the wages councils is part of the Trade Union Reform and Employment Rights Bill 1993, a bill which places a further 'burden of bureaucracy' on legal union organisation and action. These attacks on employment and union rights mean that it is much easier and cheaper to make workers redundant in Britain than in the rest of the EC. That is why, around the same time as the Hoover move, the British DAF truck plant, rather than a Dutch or Belgian plant, closed with the loss, directly and indirectly, of thousands of jobs.

The feeble action which has been organised by the USDAW, NUCPS and TGWU unions consisted of placing advertisements in The New Review of the Low Pay Unit saying they are 'fighting' low pay and the abolition of the wages councils. The TUC could only manage to lodge a 'official' complaint in Brussels over the abolition. The low-paid do not figure on their list of priorities.

## Pensioners' notes: a busy summer of campaigning

RENE WALLER

August is usually a month when pensioners' organisations don't meet, but though no big rallies have taken place since our lobby of Parliament at the end of June, this summer pensioners have been far from inactive.

For one thing, dismayed by the proposed hospital closures, pensioners have been to the fore in supporting the protests no matter what organisation called them. I didn't personally go to the north London demonstration where Virginia Bottomley nearly got pelted with eggs, but lots of pensioners I know did – and wished they'd aimed better!

I did go to the Ruskin Park to protest against proposals to close or merge Guys, Kings College and Maudsley hospitals and the first person I saw was the Secretary of Southwark pensioners group. I and another comrade had gone with copies of FRFI to sell and found that combined nicely with petitioning for signatures against VAT on fuel with the pensioners.

We in Lewisham Pensioners Action Group have been twice to the seaside in recent weeks – the first time to meet the Bournemouth pensioners and then more recently to lobby the TUC at Brighton. The weather was glorious on both occasions – you

should try joining us to get a tan!

At Bournemouth the groups were waiting to give us a warm welcome and first we were received officially by the Mayor, a Liberal Democrat who, I think, may well owe his position to the anti-Tory votes of pensioners.

That over, the group took us down to the pier for lunch and stayed with us, obviously delighted to meet others facing similar problems. No doubt many of them had moved down to the sea believing their pensions sufficient to enable them to enjoy life, but rising prices have made even the half fares on buses a deterrent to necessary shopping trips let alone jaunts to the promenades and Bournemouth's many parks.

At Brighton all those able marched from the station behind their banners down to the Civic Centre by the sea. It was good to see so many veterans of the struggle stepping out behind their banners and certainly onlookers could see our posters with their demand for increased pensions, not increased VAT. At the Civic Centre we all assembled at our fringe meeting to listen to speakers outlining our fears and our demands, and making quite sure that delegates knew exactly what we need!

To sum up, we want no truck with any proposals to meanstest our pensions, and if there is

to be 'care in the community' it must be adequately funded; we want no hospital closures or attacks on travel permits, and above all we want no VAT on domestic fuel, ie gas and electricity. Jack Jones in particular made a strong, rousing speech and reminded us that VAT would be shown separately on our bills... well, enough said.

Last week we in Lewisham resumed our monthly meetings and three embarrassed officials tried to get us to tell them whether we'd rather have hospital closures or cuts in community care or some other field! Well, really, what answer can one give to such a question? It seems to me they might do better to resign and let the government be seen to be directly responsible. Would we be worse off? I doubt it, houses cannot be built without bricks and those who try may well be held responsible if they fall down. Perhaps all councillors etc caught in this sort of dilemma should remember it.

Pensioners are now planning to present the signatures already collected against VAT on domestic fuel to Downing St on 20 October. (Meet Trafalgar Sq at noon). There will be a ceremony at the Cenotaph before going on to a rally at Central Hall at 1pm. This will be followed by a lobby of parliament and a declaration of resistance to paying VAT on fuel.

## Fewer trains – more profits

ROBERT CLOUGH

The recent announcement of the BR winter timetable heralds what privatisation will mean. There will be 10,000 fewer trains than there were last winter. Sunday and early morning service will disappear on many routes.

Meanwhile, the new round of fare increases will range between 5 and 10 per cent. The latest investment report reveals the following:

- BR will not spend a penny next year on 940 stations;
- It will only spend one third of what it needs to on line maintenance;
- Only 4 out of 15 regions will

be running 'reliable' services by 1997/98;

- 25 per cent of its rolling stock will be 40 years old by 2000.

Real investment in the network is at its lowest since the war – some £200 million. The grant to support socially necessary services has been cut from £1,150 million last year to £850 million. In 1989, the last year for which comparative figures are available, rail subsidies per head of population were £11 in the UK, £57 in France, £58 in Germany and £105 in Italy.

The intent is clear: close down rural and cross-country services as being uneconomical from the point of view of private investors. The powerful road and car lobby meanwhile can

expect billions to be spent on multi-lane motorways (the M25, M62 and M6).

Privatisation means the end of a national network. No more saver tickets, family rail cards, inter-connecting services. Even InterCity will be privatised in three chunks. Franchisees will not have to run off-peak services – but then BR are preparing us for that now.

However, opposition amongst Tory voters, particularly in the South-East, is now so great that Labour could probably kill off the already negligible private interest in franchising by declaring its intention to immediately re-nationalise the network on election. Pigs would fly (or drive trains).



## Marxist-Leninist Seminar

From 26 to 31 July several organisations met together in Southall to discuss some of the fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism. The seminar was convened by the Association of Indian Communists (AIC) and included members of the Revolutionary Communist Group (RCG), Open Polemic, the Workers Party of Belgium, the International Leninist Workers Party (ILWP) and the New Communist Party (NCP).

Andy Higginbottom, speaking for the RCG gave a paper on social democracy, showing its basis in imperialism's ability to buy off sections of the working class. He attacked the Labour Party as bourgeois and racist. The NCP leapt to Labour's defence: 'there are some very good people in the Labour Party' and 'the ruling class moved heaven and earth to stop Labour winning the last election'.

On the collapse of socialism in the Soviet Union the ILWP argued that from the 1930s on-

wards the Soviet Communists had promoted too defensive 'Popular Front' strategies in the West. Harpal Brar (AIC) disputed that Stalin had ever capitulated to imperialism, arguing that the problems arose after Stalin's death. This view was contested, and the Soviet recognition of the Zionist state of Israel by 1949 was offered as one example of concessions in Stalin's time.

The AIC conducted the seminar in a democratic manner and will publish the papers presented.

The final session rightly brought the focus back to Britain. Carlos Rule motivated the need for a new organisation 'Red Youth' (see article below). The participants agreed the RCG's proposals for a joint rally to celebrate the Great October Revolution, to explore ways that communists can work together in defence of Cuba, and especially for further discussions on racism and imperialism.

Andy Higginbottom

## Red Youth and Socialism: What's it got to do with me?

With the world diving head-first into recession, communism has never been more relevant than today - to all oppressed people, regardless of age, sex and race. The youth today face many problems which seem unsolvable. From the moment we enter school, we are manipulated by the state: pressurised to conform, and taught not to question the system. However, even the education that is given to us is being allocated according to class background.

School is often the place where many first encounter institutionalised racism, and the separation of the working class into groups of race and sex.

Recession produces mass unemployment. It is inevitable with the capitalist mode of production (even in times of economic growth). The only way to mobilise the economy out of recession under capitalism is to wage war, and this is precisely what has happened twice already during the last century. The only system that can offer us peaceful and meaningful existence with full employment is socialism, and history does indeed bear this statement out, for in 1935, while the rest of the world suffered the 'Great Depression', the Soviet Union under a socialist system that exploited no peoples at home or abroad, achieved 100 per cent employment and social prosperity through a planned economy.

All social problems faced by the youth, and indeed humanity as a whole, can be traced to capitalism. This includes the environment's destruction. The concern of any capitalist enterprise is the amount of short term profit it makes. In its greed to maximise these short term profits capitalism is quite prepared to overlook all other considerations such as safety of workers or indeed measures to safeguard the environment.

And what about the great democracy? In short, it is a myth. The right to vote for the capitalist party of our choice

does not constitute democracy. It does not mean freedom. Democracy exists for the chosen few, the 'bourgeoisie' - the owners of the corporations, the banks, the factories, the land etc - whom we are forced to go and make money for, if we are to live. Even the supposed liberty of the people falls down when it does not suit the purpose of the capitalists. For instance, recently when Somalians demonstrated against the invasion of their country by the USA (or the United Nations, if you please), the protesters were shot upon by the Americans.

Socialism is democracy for the working masses (by far a majority). The purpose of socialism is to gradually introduce communism the abolition of classes, the abolition of the suppression of any one group of people by another, the introduction of the formula 'payment in accordance with need', and the introduction of freedom. Freedom for everyone.

Capitalism is based on the exploitation of one man by another. Are you going to stand for it?

RED YOUTH endeavours to take a stance against racism, fascism, sexism, employment cuts, wage cuts, imperialism: against capitalism. We put on to organise petitions, protests (be it the form of a demonstration, or a concert etc), study, discussion, a newspaper, and also social events (sports etc) with a certain amount of political atmosphere. We are aware that there are various other youth groups who refer to themselves as being socialist, but each one is forced to follow the line, correct or incorrect, of their parent party. We only want to help to provide an interest in communism. All sorts of lines shall be presented, and the members will decide, democratically, which line the organisation shall follow.

Please join us if you want to learn about/be active in socialism. We can't achieve all this without your support! Please contact: Red Youth, 14 Featherstone Road, Southall, Middx.

Ranjeet Brar & Carlos Rule

## South Africa: Barbarism or socialism?

CAT WIENER

On 23 September, against a background of escalating violence that claimed another 84 black lives, the white only parliament in South Africa agreed legislation for the setting up of a Transitional Executive Council (TEC). This was the signal for Mandela, speaking at the UN, to call for the lifting of all sanctions against South Africa.

And so, under cover of words like 'transition to democracy' and 'victory over apartheid', the last remaining pressure against the apartheid regime was lifted. UN and Commonwealth were quick to oblige. The US announced that it would now open the door to IMF lending to South Africa; the handful of European countries who had retained some sanctions against South Africa will now drop them (Britain, of course, abandoned any pretence of sanctions long ago).

The reality has nothing whatsoever to do with democracy. The TEC, set up ostensibly to oversee the pre-election period, will have little economic or political power; control of the budget and media, for example, will remain in government hands. What it will do is weld the interests of the ANC inextricably to those of the regime in preparation for post-election power-sharing. One of the first acts of the TEC will be to form a joint force comprised of the SADF and the ANC's armed wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe; there can be little doubt that this force, armed by, amongst others, Brit-



Nelson Mandela celebrating the alliance with de Klerk

ish arms manufacturers, will be used to clamp down on unrest in the townships. The ANC's Thabo Mbeki, has warned the PAC and other 'troublemakers' that they will use force against those who continue the armed struggle beyond the election.

The PAC is refusing to participate in the TEC, and has said that unless the elections are held on the principled basis of one person one vote, for a sovereign constituent assembly, in a unitary state, it will not take part in the elections either. The elections that take place on 27 April will be democratic in name only. The real deals will already have been stitched up, and the country itself divided up and parcelled out between the main players long before the black majority get a chance to put a cross on a piece of paper. News is emerging that the ANC has been involved in secret talks with the AVF, an umbrella organisation representing most of the right-wing white political parties in South Africa, and headed by retired military

officers. These seem likely to conclude in a deal which recognises demands for a separate Afrikaner homeland, comprising of large tranches of rich farming country in the Orange Free State and the Transvaal, surrounding the heavily industrialised area around Johannesburg and Pretoria. In return, the ANC would be assured of the right wing's commitment to the electoral process. A similar deal, allowing Buthelezi an autonomous 'Kwa-Natal', is likely to follow.

Both the right wing and Inkatha have threatened civil war if their demands for separate political power, to be enshrined in the constitution before any election takes place, are not met. But the violence which has accompanied their demands - the daily body count of corpses burned and mutilated, of terror stalking the black townships of South Africa - will be as nothing if the AVF's demands are met. A white Afrikaner state will partition South Africa, condemning it to

a future of chaos and carnage, torn apart like a piece of meat. One has only to remember the partition of Ireland and the creation of the sectarian statelet in the North. James Connolly warned then that it would open the door to a 'carnival of reaction'. Mandela is paving the way for a new apartheid and an unprecedented barbarity if this deal goes ahead.

And for what? For a taste of political power for the ANC elite. But Mandela may have to wait to collect his thirty pieces of silver.

The violence and instability in the country means that the imperialists who so gladly welcomed the lifting of sanctions will be slower to put their promises into practice. Without new investment, the ANC will not be able to meet even in part the demands of the black working class for jobs, for houses, for an end to crushing poverty. Resistance will emerge, and the ANC will send troops into the townships to quell it. The struggle will then take new forms, as the black working class is forced to organise in its own interest.

Already, embittered and disaffected youth are forming their own, armed Defence Units, and telling Mandela: 'No more peace. We have heard enough. Give us guns'. It is essential that all those who oppose the sinister process that is taking place and are fighting for the liberation of the oppressed and dispossessed now begin to organise this anger. Only such a struggle can prevent South Africa's headlong plunge into carnage, barbarism and civil war.

## Support the Springbok 9

CAT WIENER

When nine anti-apartheid activists appear in Nottingham Crown Court on 8 November, it will be exactly a year since our arrest the night before the Springbok rugby team played its first game on British soil in 20 years.

In that year, 2,000 black people have died in the political violence that grips South Africa, bringing the total deaths since 1990 to 10,000. The unemployment rate for black people is 50%. In place of majority rule, the black majority are today offered the travesty of power-sharing between the National Party and ANC, with a pre-drafted constitution and a virtual veto by the white minority.

The ANC's ambivalent attitude towards the 1992 tour meant that no mass movement was mobilised in Britain to prevent it going ahead, in spite of opposition from SACOS (the non-racial South African Council on Sport), PAC and AZAPO. Taking its lead from these organisations' principled stance, City of London Anti-Apartheid Group organised the Springbok Reception Committee around the SACOS slogan: 'No normal sport in an abnormal society'. The massacres at Boipatong

Bisho, were proof enough that nothing had changed in apartheid South Africa for the black majority, that state violence and racism could not be reformed away by tinkering with sports teams to create an illusion of 'multi-racial' teams. In effect, it was a PR exercise by the apartheid regime to allow its team to play international sport.

The Springbok Reception Committee organised peaceful protests at all the matches. On the way to one match nine of us were arrested and charged with going equipped to cause criminal damage to Leicester football ground. We have pleaded not guilty. There is no doubt that the court will portray the defendants as hooligans, marginalising the importance of the campaign against the Springboks. It is therefore important to remember that at that crucial moment, City AA stood with those committed to fighting apartheid by any means necessary. Those who supported the tour, or colluded with it, have today abandoned the struggle against apartheid. In 1992 the Springbok Reception Committee was publicly condemned by the Anti-Apartheid Movement as 'perhaps a greater threat to democracy than the tour itself.'

Today the AAM is celebrating the lifting of sanctions with a

case of South African wine (courtesy of long-standing friend of apartheid John Carlisle MP).

The writing was already on the wall in November 1992. Had there been a mass movement against the Springboks, sanctions could not be so easily lifted today, and the seed would have been sown for the kind of movement in Britain that will be needed in the coming period: one that stands for majority rule in South Africa; one that opposes British imperialism's support for the deal that is currently being stitched up; one that mobilises people onto the streets of Britain to oppose apartheid.

### The Stop the Springbok 9 need your support!

Picket Nottingham Crown Court on Monday 8 November, 9.30-11.30 am, 6 Canal Street, Nottingham City Centre (opposite Nottingham BR station). Details of transport from London from City AA, BM City AA, London WC1N 3XX tel: 071 837 6050. City AA will hold An Evening of Entertainment in support of the Springbok 9 Defence Campaign. Saturday 30 October 7.30pm The Welsh Centre, Gray's Inn Road, WC1. Music and cultural events. Buffet and bar. Entrance by ticket only, £15 (£7.50 unwaged), available from City AA (as above).

## RALLY Celebrate the October Revolution



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## One law for the rich

Whilst Home Secretary Michael Howard is concerned to increase 'austerity' in prisons and put more people inside, one prisoner seems to be bucking the trend. Rich boy and friend of Royalty, Darius Guppy, recently found guilty of a £1.8m fraud and gaoled for five years, has already been moved to a rather nice open prison. In his first two months there, he got five days home leave and was photographed visiting various beautiful country hotels. Mmm, he's only 28, bit young for doing an Ernest Saunders and claiming early release due to 'premature senility'. On the other hand, he has clearly already got a pretty bad case of 'loadsamoneyitis', so that alone should get him released.

'Loadsamoneyitis' is clearly contagious. Dr Ernest Mario, former Chief Executive of Glaxo, has just got a golden handshake of £3.5 to £4 million to make up for losing his £900,000 per year job. Glaxo's current Chairman receives £1 million per year and is likely to receive an extra million under a bonus scheme. The managers of the now privatised Medway Ports in Kent, who bought the company when it was privatised for a bargain basement price of £29 million, have all reaped millions. The Chief Executive, Peter Vincent, saw his shares rise to a value of £6 million. And the dockers who used to do the actual work that made all this money possible? They were sacked and got - nothing.

Actually, a less successful privatisation scam was the Homes Assured Corporation, set up to sell worthless insurance policies to council tenants dazzled by the right to buy their homes. The company folded with debts of £10 million. But not before it had attracted non-executive directors like Sir Edward du Cann (former Tory Chairman), Douglas Perryman, former finance director of British Telecom and Eric Orbell, former manager of Commercial Union. The company charged council tenants £500 to arrange mortgages, a service that was free from building societies. Two directors have now been found guilty of fraudulent trading and await sentence. Never mind. Darius Guppy's cell is rarely occupied.

## Piling up the loot

The new list of the richest people in Britain has been released. Top is pornographer Paul Raymond - worth £1.5 billion. Next are supermarket boss, David Sainsbury, *Daily Mail* owner Lord Rothermere and banker Sir Evelyn Rothschild, all worth many millions. Margaret Thatcher is only 184th with £63 million and her son Mark, 244th. Crikey, we know Mrs T was a good housewife, but how did she save £63m out of her housewife's salary?

Meanwhile, and clearly unrelated, come the new figures showing that the number of families living in poverty in Britain rose 40% during the 1980s. ■

# Boris Yeltsin: a new Czar is born

MAXINE WILLIAMS

Western governments have rushed to back Boris Yeltsin's coup d'état and abolition of the Russian parliament. Yeltsin, a vain megalomaniac, had tired of two years of wrangling with parliament over his programme to turn Russia into a free market economy subordinated to imperialism. Having abolished parliament he went on to institute a three month period in which he alone would rule by decree. He also shut down the opposition newspaper, took over all parliamentary property, and threatened to close local councils that did not toe the line. Parliament's response was to dismiss Yeltsin as President and appoint Vice-President Rutskoi as acting President. Having thus scrapped the Constitution, Yeltsin announced that there would be new parliamentary elections in December and presidential elections in June.

Douglas Hurd said he was 'justified in what he has done. His democratic credentials are far stronger than those of the body that has been dissolved.' Clinton said Yeltsin's actions were 'consistent with the democratic and reform course'. Which indeed they are. If capitalism is to be fully reintroduced into Russia then opposition to the ensuing widespread poverty and chaos must be suppressed.

Russian workers must learn to live like workers in poor capitalist nations. The memory of full-employment and state benefits make opposition certain. Equally certain is the fact that democracy and wide-



Yeltsin flies the flag

spread poverty cannot co-exist. Yeltsin has taken a step which future Russian leaders of a free-market disposition must follow.

Douglas Hurd was quick to say that the Russian parliament wanted a return to communism. Would this were so. In fact they too mainly favour the free market but wish to see it in its social

democratic and less nationally humiliating form, something which the weak Russian economy cannot sustain. The state continues to subsidise millions of jobs in industry and the public sector. When, as capitalism demands, such subsidies are abolished tens of millions will be unemployed. A Russian capitalist government cannot afford to (and indeed would not be allowed to by the World Bank) cushion the unemployed through state benefits. Only harsh repression will force the Russian working class to accept these conditions. To avoid such social chaos and class struggle, some Western analysts have urged the US and European governments to offer aid in the transitional process. But in the midst of recession even this avenue is blocked.

The rebirth of capitalism in the former Soviet Union is proving protracted and bloody. The new capitalist class consists of a blend of former bureaucrats who will sell almost anything, including nuclear weapons, and outright gangsters, who are enriching themselves by theft and murder. The working class, demoralised and voiceless, remains unrepresented politically. That will not continue. As the full horrors of life in a poor capitalist country unfold, the working class will again find the will to recreate political forms to challenge the fate that Western and Russian parasites have mapped out for it. ■

## Government prepares to ban Socialist Party of Turkey

An urgent appeal from the Political Bureau of the Sosyalist Türkiye Partisi (STP) informs us that:

'The Turkish Constitutional Court is on the point of banning the Party for a Socialist Turkey. The STP is accused of breaking the Turkish Constitution because its political programme supports the Kurdish people's right to self determination.

The political bureau of the party declared that it was now creating a new legal Marxist party to compensate for the banning of the STP. The STP is still functioning in a full revolutionary manner and its members will in no way abandon the struggle.

The campaign against this aggression towards the STP is international. We kindly request your solidarity with Turkish communists.'

The Revolutionary Communist Group condemns the threatened ban. The problem is not the political programme of the STP but the rotten character of the Turkish constitution. The Turkish government's own record in Kurdistan is one of brutality, repression and torture. Now it seeks to silence those who oppose its barbaric policy.

The STP is to be congratulated for its resolute opposition to the ban and has the full support of the RCG. We demand that the Turkish government withdraw its threatened ban on the STP.

We urge all readers to send messages of solidarity to the STP: STP, Klodfarer cd. Dostlukyurdu sk. No: 10/6 Cemberlitas, Istanbul, Turkey.

## Bosnia dismembered

MAXINE WILLIAMS

The relentless logic of the war in former Yugoslavia has finally dismembered Bosnia. All that remains is the formal signing of the agreement by the cornered Bosnian government, to divide the territory into three ethnically based areas with the Serbs getting approximately 52%, the Croats 18% and the Muslims 30%. The Serb and Croat leaderships are delighted by a deal which adds considerable territory to their areas.

Everything about this agreement, which the European powers have forced down the throats of the Bosnian people, speaks of sordid betrayal. The Muslim area consists of four separate parcels of land which will require the construction of flyovers and 'corridors' to link together. Even their demand for access to a port, vital to their economic future, was resisted until finally the Croats were persuaded to rent them the Croatian port of Ploce for 99 years.

The negotiations towards this agreement have dragged on for months primarily because the Bosnians have resisted the break up of their state and the theft of Muslim land. The European powers and their 'mediator' Lord Owen knew they merely had to wait for the Bosnians to become exhausted. Owen recently began openly saying that the Bosnian leader, Izetbegovic, was 'the problem' for daring to demand some guarantees about the future of the precarious Muslim state.

As the final agreement drew closer, the British and other governments began to reveal their hands a little more. The EC agreed that following the 'peace', a German official will be allowed to control Mostar. Germany's support for the Croatian nationalists has always been plain, as has its wish to bring this area under its control. The European powers discussed who would 'get Mostar' even as its 50,000 inhabitants suffered hunger and daily shelling from the Croats. The British government also finally revealed its main irritation with the media coverage which, however distorted, brought some news of a war which has cost 200,000 lives so far. Both former Armed Services minister Archie Hamilton and Douglas Hurd attacked the media for 'prolonging the war'. The term 'prolonging the war' is shorthand for 'encouraging the Bosnians to expect some assistance'. Hamilton went even further and argued that humanitarian assistance had also 'prolonged the war'.

With Bosnia dismembered the war will revert to other areas. Fighting has again broken out in Croatia where the Serbs hold 30% of the territory. Now the Croats are determined to regain their territory and the Serbs are resisting.

The fact that a multi-ethnic and socialist Yugoslavia once existed is almost forgotten amongst these ruins. Almost forgotten as well are the culprits for its destruction and the ensuing carnage - the imperialist powers whose greed and cynicism have no end.

# Cuba: Hard decisions, new struggles

ANDY HIGGINBOTTOM

Leaders of the Cuban Communist Party in the face of grave economic problems announced special new measures aimed to save the Revolution. On 26 July Fidel Castro set out the reasons for the enforced retreat.

Cuba's acute shortage of internationally convertible money has become a critical problem. This year Cuba has only US \$1.72 bn for imports, just one fifth of four years ago. The US blockade means Cuba pays up to 40% higher than world market prices. Fidel explained:

'We have to buy oil, food-stuffs, medication, raw materials, spare parts, we have to buy everything. How have we been able to survive so far with such a drastic drop in the country's import capacity? It's incredible ... that our country has been able to function in an organised manner regardless of the great sacrifices.'

The new measures are geared to attracting hard currency; opportunities for foreign capital investment through joint ventures in tourism and oil, and plans to increase exports of pharmaceutical and biotechnology products.

The most controversial decision is the decriminalisation of holding foreign currency.

New channels for the accumulation of private wealth have been opened up: remittances from abroad, services to support the employees of foreign investors and tipping are all legalised. Castro acknowledged the pain of this retreat after 34 years of Revolution: 'some of these measures are unpopular, we don't like them ... We have become so used to equity that we suffer when we see someone enjoying a privilege'.

Those with access to hard currency will form a sector of privilege, and so the policy risks breaking solidarity within the Cuban working class. If that happens the economic retreat will have dire political consequences. The example of the Communist Party will be crucial. Fidel made an appeal, 'It is the revolutionaries whom we are asking for the greatest sacrifice ... (and) the most understanding. Who else can we ask? Not others, not those indifferent to the cause.'

## Solidarity vital

Cuba cannot proceed towards communism in the context of the global retreat of socialist forces. Nonetheless, it plays a leading role in Latin America's resistance to imperialism. Thousands of Brazilians welcomed President Castro to the 3rd Ibero-American meeting

between 19 Latin American leaders. He pointed to imperialism as the root cause of underdevelopment, 'In the last 12 years, through service payments on the foreign debt and losses associated with unequal terms of trade alone, Latin America has lost US\$700 bn.'

Cuba worked hard at the summit for a united effort: 'It's not a question of each country in our region trying to save itself by its own efforts, because that is an impossible dream in a world that is today dominated by industrial and political giants.'

But Latin America's governments have enforced the policies of neo-liberalism, in exchange for a junior partnership with imperialism.

Reporting back to Latin American and Caribbean left organisations, gathered days later in Havana for the 4th meeting of the Sao Paulo Forum, Castro gave this assessment: 'Nobody can claim that the objective or subjective conditions are favourable at this time for the construction of socialism ... I believe that the most important battle is ... to defeat neo-liberalism, because if we don't ... we will disappear as independent states and become more of a colony than the Third World countries ever were.'

Indeed the new US ruling party is considering tactics to

restore Cuba to its former semi-colonial status: one Democrat Congressman has put a bill promising economic aid to Cuba - emergency humanitarian relief, development assistance, export guarantees, Peace Corps programmes - and encourages a free trade agreement, provided that Fidel Castro and the communists give up power.

Solidarity action from within the US has never been more important. The second US-Cuba Friendship Caravan initiated by 'Pastors for Peace' has scored a double victory. On 6 August 100 tons of aid from the US and 60 tons collected in Mexico arrived on a freighter in defiance of the blockade. But an old yellow school bus, which had been donated for the use of Cuban children and the elderly, was not on board. US Customs at the Laredo border crossing into Mexico had impounded the bus, claiming it was destined for military purposes. The 14 'caravanistas' on board went on hunger strike.

Support protests spread across 50 US cities; in Mexico City demonstrators blockaded the US Embassy and a round-the-clock protest started outside the US Interests Section in Havana. 22 days into the strike the US was forced to back down, and released the bus. A second victory against the blockade. ■



# British-backed death squads intensify terror

SARAH BOND

This summer saw loyalist death squads escalate their terror campaign against Irish nationalists. Six Catholics have died in the north of Ireland since August; many more have only narrowly escaped attempts on their lives. The circumstances surrounding many of the attacks point once again to collusion between the death squads and the security forces.

8 August: Sean Lavery, 21-year-old son of a Sinn Féin Councillor, was killed when his home was sprayed with at least 30 bullets by UDA gunmen. This all took place just 100 yards from a British army barracks, in full view of a security camera.

11 August: the body of 24-year-old Seamus Hopkins was discovered by children. It is believed that Sean, who was left disabled after a previous sectarian attack in 1987, was beaten to death by Loyalists.

30 August: Mrs de Mogollon-Dowds was shot several times through the glass door of her home by masked UDA assassins. Her four young children were sleeping upstairs. Her husband had been told by the RUC of loyalist plans to kill him - but the RUC refused to reveal their sources, or to give him any advice on protecting himself

and his family.

1 September: delivery driver Jim Bell was gunned down by two members of the UVF.

3 September: father of six Michael Edwards was shot dead

the UDA. A local man who phoned the RUC just before the shooting with details of a car which looked 'dodgy' said they 'didn't want to know'. Just after the shooting, a British soldier



The British will resist any 'peace-plan' in Ireland

by a UDA gang as he lay in bed. The gang made their getaway via the Lisburn Road, site of an almost permanent RUC checkpoint. On this particular night however, the checkpoint miraculously disappeared for several hours.

7 September: Sean Hughes was shot dead at his shop, again by

told a Catholic man walking nearby, 'We got another one of you bastards'. Later roadblocks were set up by the RUC on the nationalist Falls and Glen Roads - but not on the Donegall Road down which the murderers made their escape.

Behind this upsurge in violence lies the fear of a possible

settlement which will make concessions to the nationalist community at the expense of loyalist privileges. Media speculation about the prospects of such a settlement continues. Sinn Féin has continued its call for dialogue between all parties. Talks between Gerry Adams and SDLP leader John Hume have, they claim, made 'considerable progress'. A joint report summarising this progress has been sent to Dublin. Adams also met with the former Dublin civil servant involved in negotiating the Anglo-Irish agreement. In a *Guardian* interview, leading Sinn Féin activist Martin McGuinness said 'we have been given hope that all the parties want to emerge with a solution', suggesting that if the British government were prepared 'to learn from South Africa and Israel, then it is conceivable to us that things could move rapidly'.

Yet there is no sign that the British government is interested in such overtures. It has recently relaunched its peace talks, but these exclude Sinn Féin and have already collapsed twice. According to a *Daily Telegraph* report, their resurrection is mainly aimed at staving off the renewed threat of a US delegation to the north of Ireland. The government anyway is known to have made a deal with Unionist politicians in return for their support in Major's Maastricht vote in July. Rumours suggest this deal may involve setting up a parliamentary Select Committee for Northern Ireland - something which hardly suggests moves to relinquish British control of the six counties.

## Gibraltar 3: 'Case to answer'

MAXINE WILLIAMS

The British government no doubt wishes that the murder by the SAS of Mairéad Farrell, Dan McCann and Sean Savage in Gibraltar in 1988, would be forgotten.

It exerted great efforts at the time to cover-up its guilt for these shoot-to-kill murders. It used media disinformation and threats to witnesses to ensure

the 'lawful killing' verdict at the subsequent inquest. It hoped that would be the end. But now the families of the Gibraltar 3 have won a ruling by the European Commission on Human Rights that the British government has a case to answer for the murders. It could take another year for the case to come before the Court of Human Rights. Stand by for dirty tricks and more media lies. ■

## Martin McGuinness targetted by British media

TV hack Roger Cook as good as asked for a death warrant for leading Republican Martin McGuinness, when he presented two programmes claiming that McGuinness was chief of staff of the IRA. This is the same Roger Cook who led the Scargill witch-hunt with the support of MI5. Martin McGuinness categorically denies membership of the IRA. He dismissed both programmes' evidence, saying it consisted of 'comments of self-confessed paid perjurers ... the unsubstantiated allegations of relatives of informers and by political opponents of Sinn Féin'. Recycling already discredited lies is apparently called 'investigative journalism'. Needless to say, Cook has not investigated the murderous activities of British-backed loyalist death squads which were at their height when the two programmes were broadcast. Sarah Bond

## Voice of the Innocent

The Voice of the Innocent was set up in August 1991 to campaign for the release of the Ballymurphy 7. Tony Garland, 19, Hugh McLaughlin, 18, James Morgan, 17, Michael Beck, 18, Stephen McMullan 24, Danny Pettigrew 19, Ciaran McAllister 20 were all arrested in 1991. They were tortured in the infamous Castlereagh Interrogation Centre where false confessions were forced out of them implicating them in IRA-related operations. They are currently being held in Crumlin Road Jail.

The group, uniting families from Greater Ballymurphy and St James' areas along with others from West Belfast, are campaigning to prevent the youths being pushed through the one-judge, no-jury, Diplock court system and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. They are demanding the immediate re-release of the Ballymurphy 7 and are fighting to end the campaign of harassment, arrest and brutalisation being waged against innocent youth in nationalist communities by the British Army and RUC.

The campaign can be contacted at 27 Ballymurphy Road, Belfast BT12 7JL.

The Ballymurphy 7 would appreciate messages of solidarity and support: they are being held in HMP Belfast, Crumlin Road, Belfast.

Pam Robinson

## British justice - no justice: common purpose and conspiracy

WENDY PEARMAN

Wherever there is oppression there will be resistance. One of the many weapons used by the oppressing powers to crush opposition will be their laws. The exact nature of the way the law is used depends on how far there is a pretence of 'democracy' and how far such a facade has been dropped.

Throughout the world it is the case that laws used against political activists frequently aim to link people to events with minimum evidence and carry harsher sentences.

### South Africa - common purpose laws

In South Africa the notorious common purpose law was used to obtain death penalties in the case of the Sharpeville Six in 1985. The six young people were charged with murder simply because they were alleged to be present on a township demonstration when a local mayor was killed. In South Africa the penalty for murder is hanging and the Six were only saved by an international campaign. Similarly 26 people in the small town of Uppington faced the death sentence on similar facts in 1990.

### Britain - 'common purpose'

Although we do not have a common purpose law, 'common purpose' prosecutions are not uncommon in Britain, and are quite frequently seen in political cases. The Tottenham Three, Engin Raghup, Mark Braith-

waite, Winston Silcott, were convicted of the murder of a policeman, during uprisings on Broadwater Farm Estate in 1985, after a 'common purpose' prosecution. There was no evidence that they individually committed any crime, but because they were alleged to be part of a crowd with a 'common intention', they were convicted. Any member of that crowd could have done nothing, or everything, but under 'common purpose' the extent of involvement in the actual killing is irrelevant. Because PC Blake-lock died, the jury was allowed to assume that every person in that area intended to kill him. Clearly that is unjust, and it is also contrary to most other laws. The fact that the three men, who were sentenced to life imprisonment, were not even in that crowd and the police evidence was corrupt, meant that two were freed on appeal, while Winston Silcott is still in prison for a murder conviction which was tainted by the Blakelock trial publicity.

### Casement Park - more 'common purpose'

Pat Kane was convicted after a 'common purpose' prosecution of the Casement Park murders. Two soldiers who drove at a West Belfast nationalist funeral cortege in a threatening way, days after mourners had been attacked with grenades at another funeral in West Belfast, were detained, beaten and shot. Pat was never accused of shooting the soldiers, but of being in the crowd who beat them. There is video evidence that he was in

that area, but that video evidence suggests that he took no part in the beatings, and, in fact, walked away from the trouble. He has an estimated mental age of about 11 years old, yet his solicitor was denied access to him until after he had made a statement, despite several attempts to see him. In the north of Ireland the British have ensured that the criminal justice regime denies those arrested even the basic rights which apply on the mainland. Confessing evidence following interrogation in the absence of a solicitor is commonly admitted. Kane did not even have the 'luxury' of a jury - he was tried by a Diplock Court, so just one judge heard the evidence, convicted and sentenced him. There is widespread anger in Ireland about this case.

### Conspiracy laws

The laws most commonly used in political cases are the conspiracy laws which were first enacted to deal with political opposition, or indeed any criticism, of the Crown. The evidence need only be circumstantial. There is no requirement for an incident, an event, any written or stated intent. Circumstances considered suspicious by the British police are all that is necessary to secure a very lengthy conviction.

There are many conspiracy laws, not just one. But they all have much the same effect. They have been used against trades unionists like the Shrewsbury pickets, national minority groups, like the Bradford 12, Asian youth

intending to defend their community against racist attack, and of course defendants in Irish political cases.

The Winchester Three - Martina Shanahan, Finbar Cullen and John McCann - were convicted of conspiracy to murder Tom King, and persons unknown. There were no deaths, no weapons, no forensic evidence or contact with weapons, and no suggestion that they had considered any other methods of killing anyone. Despite these facts they were convicted by a 10-2 majority, and sentenced to 25 years in prison. They were released by the Court of Appeal 18 months later only on a technicality. Not surprisingly, when Martina and Finbar returned to Ireland their first public comments were 'There is no such thing as British justice'.

In January this year Jimmy Canning faced a wide range of charges, because the house in which he was living, and a garage, allegedly contained explosives and weapons. Besides charges related to the possession of weapons, Jimmy was charged with specific events (for example the Soho explosion of April 1992) and of conspiracy to cause explosions. He was not convicted of causing any specific explosions. But despite that, the jury still convicted him of a series of conspiracies to cause explosions - that is, he had it in his mind to cause explosions. Jimmy is serving 30 years.

Two famous Republican prisoners who have been charged with 'conspiracy to murder' are Pearse McAuley and Nessan Quinlivan. Again, there were no

bodies to present as evidence, but we have already seen that such formalities are not needed. From beginning to end their trial was prejudiced. 'Three held for Gow murder', 'IRA cell trapped by police', were the headlines. It goes without saying that they never were charged with the murder of Ian Gow. Subsequent publicity of their escape from Brixton prison and of their re-arrest in Ireland ensures that every potential juror in Britain has a very clear picture that these two men are guilty. No one can seriously argue that they could have an unprejudiced trial here - but that is exactly what the British contend when arguing for extradition.

### Fightback

We challenge the law wherever it is used as an instrument of oppression - not just where the 'innocent' suffer, but where our comrades in struggle are targeted and victimised too, whether in South Africa, Ireland or Bradford. Where there is no proof of any intent we must challenge the legitimacy of the law. We can fight these laws - and we have had victories. Between October 1990 and January 1992, there were seven prisoners remanded on Irish political charges. Supporters wrote to each prisoner, attended their remand and court hearings and followed the cases, and not one of those prisoners is now in a British gaol. We can win!

### What you can do:

• All prisoners remanded on Irish political charges in Lon-

don go to Belmarsh Prison, Western Way, Thamesmead, SE22. Offer support, whether or not they are politically involved.

• Find out from them when hearings are. These are usually Thursday mornings at Arbour Square Court, East London. These are secure courts so you need a driving licence, passport or birth certificate to get in.

• Write to convicted prisoners offering support. ■



# Blood in their eyes

## COINTELPRO AND THE DESTRUCTION OF THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY

The Black Panther Party For Self-Defence was one of the few Left organisations of the Sixties that was truly revolutionary. Not only did it actually put forward a revolutionary position, it also set up a series of practical programmes to advance that position. The State feared its influence and because of this systematically destroyed the party using the FBI's COINTELPRO (Counter-Intelligence Programme) campaign. WILLIAM HIGHAM examines the legacy of the Black Panthers.

The Panthers were an organisation that actively called for socialist revolution. They were attempting to build a vanguard party and their community programmes were gaining them real grass-roots support amongst those who had least to gain from the capitalist system.

The demands of the famous ten-point 'Black Panther Party Platform And Program' included: the power to determine the destiny of the black community; an end to the exploitation of that community by 'the white racist businessman' - if necessary taking 'the means of production... from the businessman' and placing them in the community; 'decent' 'land, bread, housing, education, clothing, justice and peace'; an end to police brutality against the black community, to be achieved by setting up armed 'black self-defence groups'; exemption from a military service that forces them to 'fight and kill other people of colour in the world who, like [American] black people, are being victimised by the white racist government of America'; and that all black people currently or previously brought to trial should be tried by a jury of their peers from the black communities.

The most famous of its practical programmes was that of free breakfasts for school-aged children in the ghetto, which began in Oakland in 1968. By early 1969, such breakfast programmes were active in nineteen urban areas, feeding a total of 20,000 children. This led to other programmes, including Panther-run 'black liberation' schools and a nationwide system of free ghetto health clinics.

Such an organisation was dangerous. FBI director J Edgar Hoover described the Panthers as 'the greatest threat to the internal security of the US'. They had to be destroyed if the State were to maintain order in the ghettos of the USA.

That it set up the Cointelpro to do just this has been proved beyond doubt by the findings of a number of official reports. According to the Domestic Intelligence Subcommittee, the aim of the programme was to 'disrupt, misdirect, discredit and otherwise neutralise the activities' of black power organisations and other militant groups like the American Indian Movement, Puerto Rican independence fighters and anti-war groups. Cointelpro launched 293 operations in all, of which 233 were specifically directed against the Black Panther Party.

Raids on Panther Party headquarters were commonplace. The raid on the Denver HQ in 1970, where forty three officers caused \$9,000 damage in their hunt for arms and helped kill the chapter in its infancy, is typical. In Philadelphia, a flying squad raided the Black Panther Information Centre, herding all of its occupants into the street, forcing them to remove their clothing under the glare of television lights and lining them up facing a brick wall for inspection: fourteen Panthers were arrested that night, but not one was convicted. Panther offices in Jersey City were



Bobby Seale checking part of the Panthers' 'food for the poor' programme

gutted by firebombs in December 1969 and riddled with bullets, doused with gasoline and set alight in January 1970: both times police failed to find the culprit, both times Panthers blamed the police themselves for the incidents.

The Panthers' attempts to defend themselves were met with extreme force. Police were constantly raiding their LA headquarters, so the Panthers fortified it: doors were reinforced, windows shuttered and sandbags installed. This only enraged the State, which responded by sending in a SWAT team, backed up by snipers, a hundred uniformed officers, sappers and helicopters. In June 1970, when the Panther Party announced plans for three days of fund-raising activities in New Haven, Connecticut, governor John Dempsey mobilised the National Guard, cancelling all police leave in the vicinity, and Attorney General John Mitchell asked the Pentagon to station 4,000 Marines and paratroopers in nearby military bases. This response was typical of police actions against the Panthers, and shows the level of fear which the Panthers inspired.

An enormous number of informants and agents were planted in the Party too. The Panthers discovered some of these agents and ordered a ban on new recruitment and a purge of suspected Party members. By the end of 1969, Bobby Seale announced that there had been one thousand sus-

pected agents or 'jackanapes' (those whose actions would bring down the forces of the law upon the Panthers, eg by instigating robberies etc) ousted from the Party.

By 1970 barely half of the twenty four original Panther units were in operation. But this action came too late. Paid informers and mentally unstable characters, who were ultimately used by the FBI, had already done their job: setting up and/or informing upon many Party members (often using illegal entrapment) and creating a bad impression of the Party at every opportunity with their actions. By that time, their presence, and indeed the purges themselves, had created an atmosphere of distrust and confusion within Party ranks.

FBI informant Earl Anthony, in his book *Spitting In The Wind*, quotes from FBI and CIA files that also implicate the FBI in, for instance, instigating shootouts between the Panthers and other black militant groups such as Ron Karenga's United Slaves. These included the January 1969 shootout at UCLA Black Student Union in which Panthers Bunchy Carter and John Huggins were killed. The police response to the shootings, incidentally, was to raid Huggins' home (supposedly in search of the killers!) and arrest seventeen Panthers (including Huggins' wife and three-year-old child).

The State was not afraid to kill as well as harass the Panthers. Between

28 and 38 of the Party's key members are thought to have been murdered. Arthur Coltrane, Robert Lawrence, Thomas Lewis and Steven Bartholomew, for instance, were killed by patrolmen in dubious circumstances in Watts, Los Angeles. Mark Clark and Fred Hampton were shot in their beds during a police raid on Panther HQ Chicago: the evidence points to Hampton's having been drugged by an agent planted in the branch. Seventeen-year-old Bobby Hutton was shot fifty times whilst surrendering, unarmed, after a police ambush. And Welton Armstead, also only 17, was shot dead at point blank range by a police patrolman in Seattle.

Those who did not lose their lives invariably lost their liberty. From May 1967 to December 1969, 768 Panthers were arrested and \$5 million worth of bail bonds were inflicted on the Party.

Bail payments were one of the biggest drains on Party funds: and it is likely that overly high bail was imposed precisely for that reason. In early 1968, for instance, an Oakland rally on behalf of Huey Newton's defence fund raised \$9,000 in donations. Although it is impossible to prove that the events were linked, within a week 25 Bay Area Panthers had been arrested on flimsy charges, and the money needed to bail them out came to almost exactly \$9,000.

Apart from draining funds, one of the major effects of the arrests was that the imprisonment of suspects, and the lengthy trial procedures themselves, took important Party leaders and activists away from normal Party business at key times, and led to an atmosphere of uncertainty and a lack of direction.

The trial of the 'Panther 21', for instance, kept 21 Party members inactive for over two years (although every defendant was subsequently acquitted). Fred Hampton was arrested 25 times in his short tenure as Panther chief in Chicago. David Hilliard, Party Chief of Staff, was occupied for six months in fighting a charge of 'threatening the President' after a speech at an anti-war rally in 1969. And Party Chairman Bobby Seale and Party member Erica Huggins were held in isolation for eight months - and Huggins had already been in custody for six months -

waiting for their trial to begin, and a subsequent four months whilst potential jurors were being interviewed.

But it was the trial of Huey P Newton, the Party's founder and Minister of Defence, that was to have the most debilitating effect. Although the Party was democratic, without him it lost much direction. Charges against him were eventually dropped, but this was only after four years of legal battles that took Newton in and out of prison and the courts and clearly sapped a lot of his strength.

After Huey Newton was finally released, he was constantly harassed by the police. It is not clear exactly what happened to him subsequently: although he was still active in the movement, he is thought to have turned to drugs and was shot dead in what is believed (though not proved) to have been a cocaine deal. One thing is clear though: the harassment and his previous trial had put an incredible mental and physical strain on him that left him in no state to be an effective leader. Cointelpro had clearly done its job.

Although a few of those imprisoned have since either escaped or been released (Assata Shakur escaped and is living in exile in Cuba; Richard Dhoruba Moore was released after serving almost 20 years, although the US government are currently doing all they can to return him to prison), they are the minority. The rest are still imprisoned to this day: Panther Party members like Sundiata Acoli, Geronimo ji Jaga, Mumia Abu-Jamal, Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa, and Ed Poindexter are all still serving time on trumped-up charges.

Not content with taking their liberty, the State has also done all it can to break the prisoners' spirit and make them denounce their revolutionary beliefs.

The State's methods include months of solitary confinement, denying prisoners much-needed medical care or visits from relatives and friends, postponing appeals and parole board hearings, and instigating frame-ups and beatings.

And George Jackson, shot by guards in San Quentin in 1971, is proof of that, even in prison, if all of these methods should fail, the State is not afraid to resort to the ultimate deterrent: murder.

One of the Black Panther Party members still in prison, Sundiata Acoli, has written to *FRFI*, thanking us for the paper and asking us to publicise his plight which, he explains, is typical of many other Panther Party members framed by Cointelpro.

### SUNDIATA ACOLI

Sundiata Acoli is one of the longest-held political prisoners in the United States, having spent 18 years in prison.

In 1968 he joined the Black Panthers in Harlem and worked with the Party's Community Programmes. He was arrested as part of the 'Panther 21' case. Sundiata was denied bail during the hearings and was imprisoned for the entire two years it took to get the case to court. When he was finally released, he was constantly followed and harassed by the FBI and ended up going 'underground'. In 1973, he and fellow-BPP members Assata Shakur and Zayd Malik Shakur were ambushed by State troopers seeking to arrest them (using the excuse that their car had a faulty tail light). In the ensuing chase, both Malik and a trooper were shot dead, Assata was badly wounded and Acoli managed to escape, although he was picked up a few days later.

Whilst awaiting trial, he was denied all medical care, kept in isolation, not permitted visitors and a light was kept on in his cell 24 hours a day. Despite there being no evidence to link him with the shooting of the trooper, he was sentenced to life and thirty years, to be served con-

secutively. He was sent first to Trenton State Prison where, because he was 'politically oriented', he was kept for five years in a cell in the MCU (Management Control Unit) that was recorded to be smaller than the SPCA's space requirement for a German Shepherd dog!

He was then transferred to Marion, which is considered to be the worst prison in the US and has been condemned by Amnesty International for violating the UN's Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners. It is also supposedly reserved for prisoners who have committed violent acts while in prison, which Sundiata never had. After eight years and a great deal of national pressure, he was finally transferred to Leavenworth, where he remains to this day.

He has worked hard to restore his 'good time' (an amount of time a prisoner has built up in which s/he is considered to have maintained 'good conduct'). This has made him immediately eligible for parole, but it looks likely that he will be denied it anyway - and will be forced to serve another ten years before he will be allowed to come up before the parole board again.

In her excellent and harrowing autobiography, Assata Shakur said of Sundiata: 'From every part of his being you can sense the presence of revolutionary spirit and fervour.' He asks readers to send letters calling for his release to the New Jersey State Parole Board, CN-862, Trenton, New Jersey 08625, and letters of support to: PO Box 5538, Manhattanville Station, Harlem, New York 10027.



The Declaration of Principles signed by the Israeli government and the Palestine Liberation Organisation on 13 September 1993 is a contemptuous and humiliating insult to all those who have died and all those who continue to fight for national and social liberation in Palestine.

EDDIE ABRAHAMS analyses the background to the agreement.

**T**he agreement proposes to establish a Palestinian Interim Self-Governing Authority (PISGA) across the whole of the Occupied Territories beginning with the poverty stricken and strategically insignificant Gaza Strip and the 100 square kilometres around Jericho city. A 'final settlement' is then scheduled within five years of the formation of the Self-Governing Authority. This 'peace'-plan is neither new nor radical. It is the fruit of the Madrid Peace Process begun in October 1992. What was evident then remains the case today:

'At the heart of this conflict is the right of the Palestinian people to form an independent state in Palestine. This right is rejected, even in principle, by the USA and Israel. How can one talk of a serious (peace) conference when Palestinian self-determination does not even feature on the agenda.

All that is on offer is a 'transitional period' of 'autonomy' ... lasting some 3 to 5 years ... following which the promise of a final settlement. An old scheme, dismissed in 1988 by the then Palestinian mayor of Ramalla as 'power to collect garbage and exterminate mosquitoes! Nevertheless, today, with the intifada beleaguered and isolated, imperialism hopes that offering the Palestinian bourgeoisie the sop of 'autonomy' will be enough to silence the challenge of the intifada.' (FRFI 104, Dec 1991/ Jan 1992)

Less than one year later, the leadership of the PLO, headed by Yassir Arafat, has accepted the sop and abandoned all the national and democratic ideals of the Palestinian revolution. In exchange for what amounts to a neo-colonial, apartheid bantustan style 'autonomy', Arafat promises to try and terminate not just the intifada but the armed struggle and the Palestinian revolution itself. While Palestinian workers and peasants continue to suffer aggravated poverty and are gunned down in their own streets, Arafat committed the PLO to:

'encourage and call upon the Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza Strip to take part in steps leading to the normalisation of life...' (Letter to Norwegian Foreign Minister, *Financial Times*, 10 September 1993)

In another letter to Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, equating the revolutionary armed struggle of the oppressed with violence and terrorism Arafat states:

'... the PLO renounces the use of terrorism and other acts of violence and will assume responsibility over all PLO elements and personnel in order to assure their compliance, prevent violations and discipline violators.' (ibid)

It is hardly surprising that the PLO has now split, with the left-wing Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) resigning from the PLO executive along with a number of other opposition groups. George Habash, leader of the PFLP, has urged the Palestinian movement to hurl Arafat into the 'dustbin of history'. These forces are attempting to forge an alliance to organise and mobilise popular opposition to the deal.

This 'peace'-plan does nothing to advance even the most elementary requirements of the vast majority of Palestinians for popular power, self-determination and independent economic development. The response of the underground leadership of the intifada in the West Bank and Gaza Strip makes the issues abundantly clear:

'The agreement reached between a branch of the PLO and the Zionist enemy does not meet the minimum demands that were raised by our masses when the uprising started. No Israeli withdrawal has been achieved, no recognition of the Palestinian national rights, no establishment of a Palestinian state and no freeze and removal of the settlements.'

The signing of the Declaration marks the final end to the PLO's role as a vanguard anti-Zionist, anti-imperialist movement in the Middle East. It represents a victory for Zionism, imperialism and the Arab bourgeoisie. Within the Palestinian arena it is a victory for the PLO's bourgeois trends and a defeat for the mass movement. The Palestinian bourgeoisie and their political representatives in the PLO are making their final peace with Zionism and imperialism. They are being willingly incorporated into a reactionary alliance against the working class, peasantry and poor of the entire region.

### The 'peace'-plan for a bantustan

The neo-colonial, anti-working class, anti-popular character of the PLO-Israel agreement is hard to dispute. The PISGA, once it is established, will have no power whatsoever over Zionist settlements which include the richest and most fertile areas of



Yassir Arafat: called off the armed struggle

the Occupied Territories. It will have no jurisdiction over any Israeli citizens in any part of the Occupied Territories. It will have no authority over refugees or foreign affairs or relations with neighbouring countries. And it will have no control over Arab east Jerusalem. The Israeli police and army will have free use of all roads within the PISGA.

The PISGA itself will be a glorified local council with 'power' over health, welfare, education and tourism. It will also be required to form a Palestinian police force to keep law and order. This plan is but a modification of Israeli proposals advanced earlier this year:

'All land occupied by Zionist settlers, all roads, military zones and

public land, including the Jordan Valley and the West Bank Highlands will come under complete Israeli jurisdiction. This amounts to over 70 per cent of the Occupied Territories!

Palestinian autonomy over the remaining portions of land will be the autonomy of a bantustan. Israel will retain control of internal security and foreign relations. It will in addition control the infrastructure and water supplies, all land which is not privately owned and will have power to determine who shall or shall not reside in the Occupied Territories. These proposals merely transfer to Palestinians an existing colonial administration over which Israel will retain ultimate power through parallel structures of 'residual authority'. (FRFI 113, June/July 1993)

Even while signing the agreement, the Israeli government ploughs on remorselessly with its programme to complete 11,000 housing units constituting the largest ever building programme in the Occupied Territories. This is part of Rabin's plan to rationalise the expansion and development of Zionist settlements. Their strategic distribution and the network of roads and military zones linking them will secure Zionist control of the largest part of the Territories and restricts Palestinians to four enclaves in the West Bank, and two in Gaza, all isolated from each other and totally dependent on Israel.

Twenty six years of Israeli occupation have destroyed the economy of the West Bank and Gaza subordinating it totally to the needs of the Zionist settlers and Israeli capital. The combined Gross Domestic Product of the West Bank and Gaza is but 5 per cent of that of Israel. Gross National Product per head in the West Bank is just \$2,000 while in the Gaza it is \$1,200. The Israeli figure is \$10,800. In this context it is downright treachery to speak of an independent Palestinian state even in the Occupied Territories as a whole, let alone in just the Gaza and Jericho. In the Gaza Strip at least 260,000 of the areas 780,000 people live in squalid refugee camps. Male unemployment now stands at 62 per cent and poverty is becoming desperate. An UNRWA official, Alex Pollock, notes that nearly all the area's infrastructure is 'either missing or in a deplorable state'.

This makes talk of the PISGA being merely a preparatory stage towards an independent Palestine, in a 'final settlement' five years hence, nothing but a deception. By then no Palestinian entity will exist! The Israeli government has repeatedly made clear, along with the US, its total opposition to any independent Palestinian state. Even as the 'peace'-deal was being signed in Washington, Israel issued a statement via its Paris embassy reiterating its 'opposition to the creation of an independent Palestinian state'.

The Declaration says nothing about the 'right of return' for Palestinians refugees expelled from their homeland from 1948 onwards. It leaves intact the entire Zionist colonial-settler state and military machine, ready to be used against resurgent revolutionary movements or other forces hostile to imperialism. Since the agreement President Clinton has assured Israel that there will be no cut in billions of dollars of US aid and military assistance.

# Palestine the great



In Ein Helweh refugee camp, southern Lebanon, PFLP members spray the walls: 'No to the Gaza-Jericho'

### Accord unites imperialist capital and the PLO against the people

The leaders of the USA, EC and Japan welcomed the Declaration as a decisive step to end the Palestinian revolution which over the decades presented the greatest threat to imperialist control over the region and its oil riches. They all understand however that the devastated economy of the Occupied Territories cannot sustain a stable bantustan PISGA. Poverty and desperation will breed opposition and threaten a revival of a revolutionary challenge. It is necessary therefore to take precautions.

First they will try to bribe and silence this opposition. In the words of Alex Pollock:

'... a well-funded programme could immediately provide jobs, alleviate [he proposes merely to alleviate not eliminate] suffering and defeat political opposition.' (*Financial Times*, 10 September 1993)

An EC diplomat put the same message in a different way:

'Steps will have to be taken to support the population there otherwise the politics of despair will take over very quickly.' (*The Guardian*, 1 September 1993)

To this end imperialism is preparing a financial package with promises from the EC, the US, Japan and a number of Scandinavian countries. Meanwhile Arafat is touring the oil-rich Middle East governments begging for money to help buy support for the plan.

Lest this bribery does not work, the *Financial Times* reminds us that the Declaration:

'commits the new Palestinian police force to co-operate with

Israeli security forces in combating Hamas and other radicals in the territories which remain committed to the armed struggle.' (*Financial Times*, 15 September 1993)

Abdullah Hourani, an independent member of the PLO Executive who has now resigned, quite correctly said:

'This agreement transforms the Palestinian autonomy authority into a repression apparatus against our people in favour of Israel.' (*Financial Times*, 13 September 1993)

Large sections of Palestinians, even those among the ranks of Yassir Arafat's Al Fatah, see through the fraud of the Declaration. 180 Al Fatah guerrillas in Jordan issued a statement refusing to join the proposed Palestinian police force:

'We are ready to serve in a nationalist police force in an independent Palestinian state, but not to be tools to suppress our peoples' resistance against the Israeli occupation.' (ibid)

### Who gains, who loses?

The only beneficiaries of the Declaration are the imperialists, the Zionists and the Arab/Palestinian bourgeoisie. The end of the Palestinian revolution will mean greater security for imperialist oil profits in the region. For the Zionists it opens the possibility of much more systematic and peaceful colonisation of Palestine (See FRFI 113, June/July 1993). The Declaration is a critical component of Zionism's strategy:

'By incorporating the Arab states into a settlement with Zionism, it isolates the Palestinian national liberation struggle. By seeking to incorporate the Palestinian bour-



# at betrayal



need of the PLO to remove itself from the influence of 'trade unions, labour groups and old-time socialists.' The PLO must, in other words oppose the these groups demands for social and economic justice – demands which represent the interests of the vast majority of Palestinians.

## The PLO, the Palestinian bourgeoisie and the Revolution

The fundamental issue that today confronts socialists and anti-imperialists is to explain why and how the PLO, once a powerful symbol of anti-imperialist struggle, has surrendered with such a whimper. Why has it signed a 'peace'-accord which, in the words of Ali Jiddah, a PFLP supporter who spent 17 years in a Zionist prison (interviewed in FRFI 101 June/July 1991), 'is a total subjection of the Palestinians to Israeli and American conditions.'

Current developments are the culmination of a long process spanning some two and a half decades during which the right-wing, bourgeois and petit-bourgeois trends within the PLO, represented primarily by Al-Fatah, has sought to seize total control of the organisation and curtail and stifle the truly popular, anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist struggle of the Palestinian masses.

During 26 years of the Zionist occupation and economic subjugation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the Palestinian bourgeoisie and wealthier sections of the petit-bourgeoisie became internally integrated into the Zionist economy. Externally they were also dependent on the flow of aid from the oil-rich pro-imperialist Gulf states. Within the Arab diaspora, the substantially wealthy Palestinian bourgeoisie has always tied its fortunes to the bourgeoisie of the Arab world rather than the popular democratic struggle of the masses. As a result, the Palestinian right-wing's commitment to the national liberation struggle has always been qualified by its own narrow class interests and by its ties to the Arab bourgeoisie and the Zionist economy. Its interests are therefore opposed to a consistent and uncompromising struggle against Zionism, imperialism or capitalism.

The Palestinian bourgeoisie saw the national struggle as no more than a stepping stone to greater profits unfettered by Zionist rule. It opposed Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza because the occupation curtailed its own economic advancement, not because it devastated the lives of the masses. For the Palestinian bourgeoisie, the mass popular revolution was but a bargaining counter to be used in its selfish dealings with imperialism and Zionism. Like the bourgeois trend in all other liberation movements, the right wing of the PLO could not express or fight for the needs of the majority. Quite the contrary, it has always opposed the popular, socialist and revolutionary nationalist trends within the PLO.

At the peak of the PLO's anti-imperialist role, these left-wing and revolutionary nationalist trends were serious contenders to take over the leadership of the struggle. Imperialism therefore, in alliance with

Zionism and the Arab bourgeoisie, spared no violence to destroy them. In September 1970, King Hussein's army suppressed a mass insurrection and drove the PLO out of Jordan. In 1976 Assad's Syrian regime used its army to save the Lebanese fascist falange from defeat at the hands of a joint democratic and leftist Lebanese/Palestinian alliance. Again in 1982, the PLO was subjected to savage attack when Israel invaded Lebanon killing 25,000 people. In 1984, the Syrian regime again intervened to stifle a resurgent left-wing popular alliance. From 1988 onwards the imperialists and Arab regimes ensured the total isolation of the intifada. This facilitated the Zionist repression which worked to drain and exhaust a mass popular movement which was moving to establish popular power and dual power.

These repeated assaults severely weakened the position of the left and revolutionary nationalist forces. They allowed the bourgeois forces to consolidate their position within the PLO which underwent a process of degeneration. Gulf oil money helped to nurture a privileged anti-democratic, bureaucratic stratum whose comfortable existence decisively separated it off from the lives and experience of the majority of the Palestinian poor and exploited.

Thus the Palestinian bourgeoisie and its political representatives in the PLO lost any semblance of political principle and political independence. They steadily moved to tie their fortunes more tightly to the Arab ruling class. They abandoned the revolutionary and armed struggle and in return hoped that imperialism would reward them by pressurising Zionism into a compromise settlement.

The Gulf War marked a crucial turning point for these forces. The

political and financial crisis. Meanwhile on the West Bank and Gaza accelerated Zionist colonisation was threatening the remaining Palestinian bourgeois privileges. In these conditions, the PLO's bourgeois leadership threw in the towel and prepared to sue for peace on any conditions. They got the Madrid Conference and now the Declaration of Principles.

In its cowardly compromising behaviour the Palestinian bourgeoisie reflects in a concentrated form the character of the Arab bourgeoisie and indeed the bourgeoisie of most oppressed nations in the post-Soviet, new colonial times. Today they have abandoned all programmes for genuine independent national development and are prostrating themselves before their imperialist masters. The Arab ruling class was willingly incorporated into the imperialist alliance to crush Iraq. In the Third World as a whole, the ruling class has enthusiastically endorsed neo-liberalism which is enabling imperialism to once again seize total control of the world's natural resources and labour.

During the great anti-colonial and anti-imperialist struggles of the post-war period things were different. The strength and economic performance of the USSR stood as an example of the possibilities, even to the vacillating bourgeois and petit-bourgeois trends, of independent economic development. The existence of the Soviet Union was a fetter on imperialism and offered the anti-colonial and anti-imperialist movements, even those led by bourgeois nationalists, a greater degree of freedom to manoeuvre in their struggles. Liberation movements were able to hope and to fight for political and economic independence from imperialism as a first stage in improving the material conditions of the masses.

In this context left-wing forces within liberation movements wielded significant power. In relation to the Middle East US Secretary of State Warren Christopher admitted as much, asserting that the Soviet Union whilst it existed:

'emboldened radicals, intimidated moderates and left Israel, save for the friendship of the United States, in a lonely state of siege.' (*International Herald Tribune*, 21 September 1993)

However, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the socialist bloc has enabled imperialism to decisively



The Gaza Strip: 780,000 Palestinians live in squalor and dire poverty

Arab ruling classes' willing alliance with the US in its war to crush Iraq, marked the Arab bourgeoisie's total submission to imperialism and the final humiliation and disintegration of the Arab nationalist movement. This totally isolated the Palestinian bourgeoisie, especially after the PLO, due to mass Palestinian anti-imperialist sentiment, was forced to support Iraq during the War. With an end to Gulf oil funding and with support from the Arab world at its lowest level, the PLO also faced a major

reassert unrivalled international economic, political and military power against all Third World opposition. In consequence, the dependent bourgeoisie, weakened by its own corruption and its own subordination to imperialist capital, has neither the ability nor the will to seriously oppose imperialism. In exchange for a few perks it shamelessly submits to imperial dictators whilst the conditions of the masses touches levels of unprecedented poverty and suffering.

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the onset of the new colonialism has highlighted once again the compromising and cowardly role of the bourgeoisie in the national struggle. James Connolly, a great Marxist and fighter for Irish national liberation murdered by the British in 1916, aptly noted that in the national struggle the working class cannot rely on 'the leadership of a class whose social character is derived from oppression.' All 'bourgeois movements end in compromise' and the 'bourgeois revolutionist of today becomes the conservative of tomorrow.' In the epoch of imperialism therefore, only 'the working class remains as the incorruptible inheritors of the fight for freedom.'

The cowardly role of the Palestinian bourgeoisie makes Connolly's standpoint particularly appropriate for Palestinian revolutionaries. For the sake of some minor neo-colonial economic and political privileges, the Palestinian bourgeoisie and its political representatives in the PLO have betrayed the interests of the masses. They have abandoned the struggle for a secular and democratic state across the whole of Palestine which could set the stage for real national and social emancipation for all the workers and peasants of the region – Arab or Jewish.

## The future of the Palestinian revolution

For over five months the West Bank and Gaza Strip have been sealed off from Israel and from Jerusalem. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians and their families who rely on slave labour in Israel for their meagre living are now desperately hungry. Imperialism, Zionism, Arab reaction and the PLO hope that the promise of international aid to release the masses from their desperate position will reconcile them to the neo-colonial autonomy plan and marginalise the opposition.

This task will not be easy. There have been numerous strikes and demonstrations against the deal. The left within the Palestinian movement, having withdrawn from the PLO, is organising against the sell-out. But confronted with the radical rhetoric of the fundamentalist forces, the left's fortunes will depend on how clearly and persuasively it can demonstrate that in this epoch the struggle for national liberation cannot be separated from the struggle for social liberation, that for success the struggle against Zionism and imperialism must be united with the struggle against capitalism.

The influence of Muslim fundamentalism among the poor and dispossessed of Palestine (see FRFI 113, February/March 1993) will seriously hinder the task of developing and consolidating an anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist opposition. Despite its radical rhetoric opposing the agreement, Hamas, the major fundamentalist organisation, is already engaged in secret negotiations with Al Fatah. It is not so much opposed to the deal as to the apportioning of the spoils. In any event, fundamentalism's opposition to the PLO has never had any revolutionary or democratic content. This is evident from its support for private property and capitalism, its programme for driving women out of social life and out of the liberation struggle, its virulent opposition to communism's democratic, collective and egalitarian standpoint and its sectarianism against Palestinian Christians.

The Palestinian revolution confronts difficult days ahead. The least we can do in Britain is to continue exposing the reactionary role of imperialism and Zionism is sustaining an order in the Middle East the end result of which is abject poverty, war and death for the majority, whilst enormous riches are siphoned off to feed the greed of a tiny rich minority in the imperialist heartlands.

Awartani is forthright about the



# Haunted by the Labour Aristocracy

## Part I: Marx and Engels on the split in the working class

**T**he latest article by Corr and Brown in *International Socialism* (Issue No 59, Summer 1993, pp37-74) is a lazy, frequently dishonest production. The tone is set in the introduction, where they condemn a well-known writer on imperialism, Arghiri Emmanuel, for postulating 'a fundamental asymmetry in the system - in one area high wages and low profits, in the other low wages and high profits.' (p38) Their comment? 'This comes very close to the purely national division of the world into "proletarian" and "bourgeois" nations.' To more normal people, it comes 'very close' to Lenin's description of the 'essence of imperialism' - the division between oppressor and oppressed nations.

As we shall see, what is really at issue in the argument is indeed the existence and nature of imperialism, and that far from undermining the concept of the revolutionary role of the working class as the SWP argues, recognising and understanding the concept of the labour aristocracy is critical to re-affirming that revolutionary role.

Hence we are not debating some abstract historical point. Bourgeois democracy depends on capitalism's ability to recruit a section of the working class to its side. But not just any section: it must be a stratum which controls the principal organisations of the working class, and which can constantly exclude any revolutionary element from these organisations - that is, act as the 'labour lieutenants of capital'. To win and retain the allegiance of this section, capitalism must be able to offer it a relatively privileged position, to give it a stake in capitalism's survival. The stratum is not fixed: its composition will change according to capitalism's development. Over the last hundred years (150 in the case of Britain), the fate of this stratum or labour aristocracy has been tied up with that of imperialism. Its form has changed: a hundred years ago, it was made up of skilled manual workers, whether in Britain, the US or Germany. Now it is more made up of white collar workers in the higher echelons of the public and service sectors. But without its support, imperialism could not maintain its democratic facade. In conditions where this privileged layer has proved incapable of controlling the organisations of the working class, or where imperialism has been unable to sustain it to any degree, the ruling class has had to resort to military or fascist rule.

In contrast, the struggle of revolutionaries and communists is to drive this privileged stratum from its positions of control, to isolate it from the rest of the working class. Without this political and ideological struggle, there can be no prospect of socialism. We can begin to see already the close connection between the SWP's rejection of the concept of

The SWP is obsessed by the concept of the labour aristocracy. Every few months without fail, an article appears in *Socialist Worker*, *Socialist Review* or *International Socialism*, always with the same refrain: there is no such thing as a labour aristocracy, nor has there ever been any kind of privileged stratum of the working class, especially one whose privileges were dependent on the survival of imperialism. ROBERT CLOUGH analyses the latest attempt to revise this theory. Part One examines whether Marx and Engels had a theory of the labour aristocracy.

the labour aristocracy, and a political practice which involves building an alliance with the left wing of this privileged stratum, particularly the left of the Labour Party. Hence Corr and Brown are not just discussing history: they are defending the political practice of the SWP. As we shall see later, their attack on Lenin in particular serves as a justification for their uncritical alliance with the left of the Labour Party on any issue to do with British imperialist foreign policy - be it Ireland, the Falklands or the Gulf War.

tioned it have done so at a distance of at least half a century, and are either virulent anti-communists (in particular Professor Seton-Watson who really started this hare running in 1953), bourgeois labour historians who deny the existence of classes let alone strata within classes (such as H Pelling), other modern labour historians who have a vested interest in playing down the significance of privilege (such as Stedman Jones), or the SWP. There is not a single authority within the revolutionary movement either now or at any stage in the

(p41), or he used the term to refer to the trade union leaders, not to the privileged workers they led in the late nineteenth century. In particular, they say that whenever Marx made reference to the bribery of this upper stratum, 'the form of that bribery was left vague' (p42). However, it was quite overt. Marx worked alongside English trade union leaders in the Workingmen's International in the 1860s. The International was the prime force behind the formation of the Reform League in 1865, which agitated for universal male suffrage



Bloody Sunday 1887: a contingent of unemployed attacked by police in St Martin's Lane

However, Corr and Brown have a major problem: that every contemporary political commentator on the phenomenon of the classic, late nineteenth century labour aristocracy not only recognised its existence, but usually predicated part of their political activity on either fostering it (The Liberal Party, Disraeli), organising it (the New Model Trade Unions), or fighting its bankrupt political standpoint (the revolutionaries). The existence of a privileged stratum of the British working class, overwhelmingly its skilled section in this period, was taken for granted in every political circle in the second half of the nineteenth century. In fact, the only people who have ques-

past century who contested the issue; as materialists, they liked to deal with real phenomena rather than conjure them out of existence.

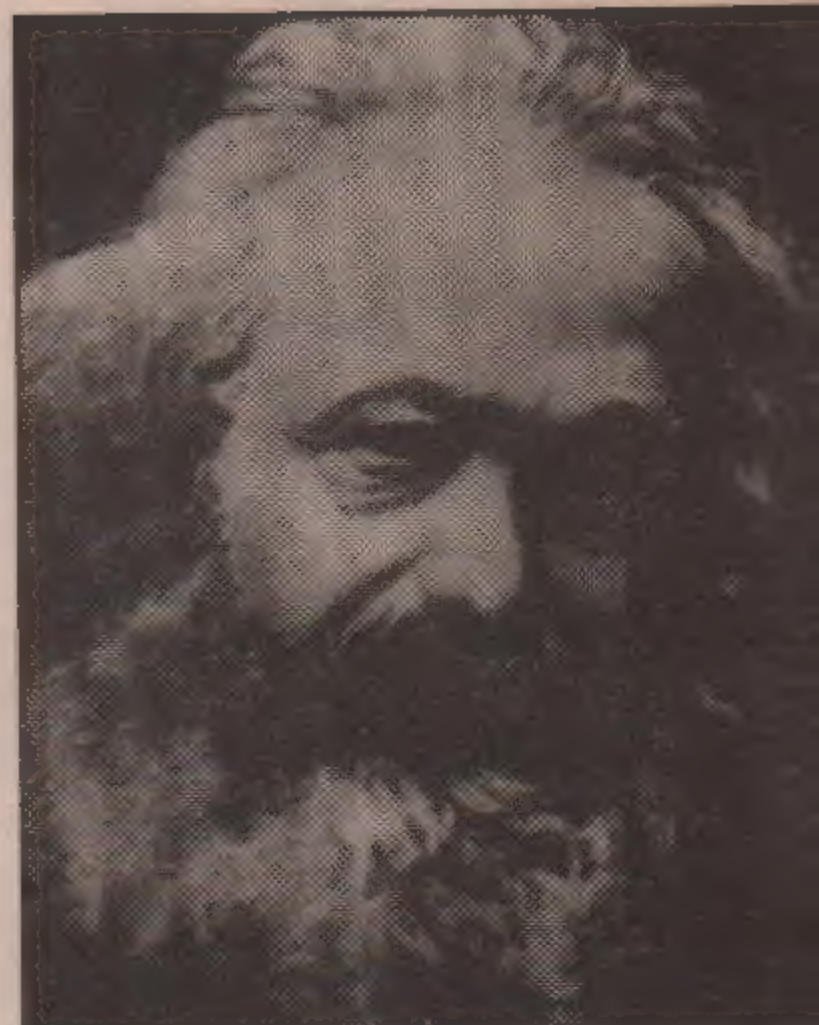
So how do our authors perform their own conjuring tricks? Selective quotation, sleight of hand, innuendo, a vast amount of ignorance, in other words, by using all the normal tools of the bourgeois academic trade. They start with Marx; so shall we.

### Did Marx have a theory of the labour aristocracy?

Yes he did, whatever our authors say. Their view is that when he referred explicitly to its existence, it was in a 'descriptive' not 'analytic' manner

and a secret ballot. Its committee of twelve consisted of six workers and six middle class reformists.

Despite Marx's efforts, the workers soon adapted to the standpoint of the middle class reformists. The League started to receive considerable finance from far-sighted capitalists, and in particular leading Liberal politicians. As a result, the League qualified its demand for male suffrage with the phrase 'registered and residential'. This property qualification would exclude the mass of unskilled and casual workers. Marx condemned the manoeuvres of these working class leaders for the compromises they made. In 1868, it was the Tory Disraeli who 'dished the Whigs'



Karl Marx

by granting the extension of the suffrage to include about one in five workers; this respectable upper stratum had proved themselves worthy of this right, one which the ruling class was sure they would exercise with moderation. Later, in the 1868 general election, working class leaders were paid election expenses of £10 a head to canvass for the Liberals - a very direct bribe in any terms. Hence Marx's comment on one British leader of the English workers, 'that he is not one of the so-called leaders of the English workers, since these men are more or less bribed by the bourgeoisie and the government' (*Minutes and Documents of the Hague Congress of the International*, p124).

Marx's experience in the First International was one of continuous struggle against the English trade union leaders, firstly on the Irish question and the defence of Fenian prisoners, and secondly in defence of the Paris Commune. Corr and Brown say that when Marx 'addressed the London Congress of the First International in 1871 and "made reference to the unions as "an aristocratic minority" with most workers outside them, (he) again seemed to use the term in a general descriptive sense' (p42). They clearly have not read what he said, which completely undermines their position:

'The Trades Unions are an aristocratic minority - the poor workers cannot belong to them. The great mass of workers whose economic development is driven from the countryside into the towns every day has long been outside the trades unions - and the most wretched mass has never belonged; the same goes for the workers born in the East End of London; one in 10 belongs to the Trades Unions - peasants, labourers never belong to the societies.'

The Trades Unions can do nothing by themselves - they will remain a minority - they have no power over the mass of proletarians.' (*Minutes of the London Congress of the International, Marx and Engels Collected Works*, Vol 22, p614)



This conclusion was drawn from the experience of nearly a decade of struggle, through which the unions had shown their complete contempt for the most oppressed sections of the working class, both at home and abroad. To suggest that he was using the term 'descriptively' is utter nonsense. It was these trade union leaders who attempted to get a motion of censure on Marx in the International in 1872 for saying that the English labour leaders had sold themselves 'to Gladstone, Morley, Dilke and others' (*Minutes and Documents of the Hague Congress of the International*, p702). Those nineteenth century union leaders had a better understanding of Marx's threat to their position than do twentieth century academics.

## Did Engels develop Marx's position?

Yes, he did, and in discussion with Marx too. Our two authors aren't quite clear on this; on the one hand, they say 'Like Marx, Engels began to detect the emergence of labour aristocracy in the early 1850s' (p43), on the other, they refer to the 'somewhat ambiguous ideas sketched by Marx and especially by Engels' (p46). But there is nothing ambiguous in his description in 1885 of the situation between 1850 and 1870, when he writes that 'A permanent improvement can be recognised for two "protected" sections only of the working class.' The first section are factory workers protected by limits on the working day, and:

'Secondly, the great Trade Unions. They are the organisations of those trades in which the labour of grown-up men (his emphasis) predominates, or is alone applicable. Here the competition neither of women or children nor of machinery has so far weakened their organised strength. The engineers, the carpenters and joiners, the bricklayers are each of them a power to the extent that as in the case of the bricklayers and bricklayers' labourers, they can even successfully resist the introduction of machinery ... They form an aristocracy among the working class; they have succeeded in enforcing for themselves a relatively comfortable position, and they accept it as final. They are the model working men of Messrs Leone Levi and Giffen, and they are very nice people nowadays to deal with, for any sensible capitalist in particular and for the whole capitalist class in general.



Frederick Engels

But as to the great mass of the working people, the state of misery and insecurity in which they live now is as low as ever, if not lower.' (In *Marx and Engels: Articles on Britain*, pp378-9)

What is the conclusion of our authors after they quote part of this passage? 'But what Engels seemed to make was a close identification of "aristocrats" with bureaucrats', continuing: 'Later

writers specifically refused to identify "aristocrats" with "leaders", the whole point being to shift the focus onto a layer of workers' (their emphasis, p44). Who are they trying to kid? In fact they are so poorly researched that when they go on to say that Engels' 1892 *Preface to The Condition of the Working Class in England* was 'Engels' fullest denunciation of the "aristocracy among the working class" – a "small, privileged protected minority" steeped in "respectable bourgeois prejudices" and "permanently benefited" by the proceeds of empire' (p44), they do not realise he is quoting a large chunk of his 1885 article. They themselves have not read the *Preface* – only Lenin's citations from it! This is not a trivial point; it exposes the bogus erudition of the article – it is no more than cod academicism.

For Engels, the aristocracy are the skilled sections of the working class organised in their New Model Unions. So when Corr and Brown argue 'It is still hard to pin down exactly who the labour aristocrats were for Engels' (p45) we can only conclude it is hard for them to understand anything. Already in the 1850s Engels and Marx were discussing the corruption of the English working class movement and connecting it to England's industrial monopoly. As Engels said in a letter to Marx in 1858: '...the English proletariat is actually becoming more and more bourgeois... For a nation which exploits the whole world this is of course to a certain extent justifiable.' (*Marx and Engels: Selected Correspondence*, p132). For those who would like to draw a distinction between Marx and Engels' alleged 'crudities', it is noteworthy that Marx never once contradicted Engels in his development of the position.

Our authors concede this, but then say 'there is no description or explanation of the mechanism by which the bribery works' (p43), and repeat the point elsewhere (eg p42, p45). That the bribes or privileges existed there is of course no doubt.

## What were the privileges?

The labour aristocracy's privileges were both economic and political. Economically, their jobs were far more assured than those of unskilled workers; typically their unemployment rates were half or one third those of unskilled workers. Their wages were much higher – some 40 shillings per week at a time when the unskilled worker earned 20 to 25 shillings. They tended to live apart from the mass of the working class, socially and geographically. Their children had access to education. With higher wages came better food, better health and a longer life.

The political privileges were equally significant: the vote being one. The 1868 Reform Act with its property qualifications consolidated the developing aristocracy of labour by allowing it to participate in the bourgeois democratic process. This is not considered at all by our authors, although they speak for an organisation whose desire to vote Labour at every possible opportunity is remarkable if only for its single-mindedness. Yet this was the point at which the leaders of this aristocratic minority, aided by the most direct of bribes, sacrificed the interests of the mass of the working class for those of its privileged section, and became no more than an appendage to the Liberals.

Another political concession that came with increasing respectability was the legalisation of trade union organisation. However, the New Model Unions embraced only the skilled sections of the working class, and quite deliberately excluded the unskilled, through apprenticeships and restrictions on the number of labourers they might supervise. Corr

and Brown, in defending these unions, argue that 'Nevertheless, it is one thing to forsake revolutionary class struggle but quite another to accept the philosophy of capitalism. The craftist unions clearly did not do this' (p60). Well, they appear to be alone in this judgement. Applegarth, leader of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, and a member of the notorious London Junta, wrote in 1866:

'Let us then unite with dignified firmness and rest not until our unions have that protection to which they are entitled, and I trust that with such protection and a few more years' experience, we shall have established a new era in the history of labour, have gained the full confidence of our employers, adopted arbitration as the first resort of our differences, and freed our unions from the expense and anxiety of strikes as far as it is possible to do so...' (Quoted in T Rothstein: *From Chartism to Labourism*, p186)

Now this would seem to be very much an 'acceptance of the philosophy of capitalism'; indeed, if a movement forsakes revolutionary struggle, it can do no other. Even Francis Williams, the official historian of the Labour Party some 45 years ago, is quite clear on the moderation of the skilled unions; discussing their role in the formation of the London Trades Council in 1860, he wrote:

'What was no less important was that they understood the middle-class point of view – the point of view of those who in increasing measure now formed public opinion – because they shared it. Their modest ambition indeed was to establish a new group within that wide amorphous class, raising the skilled workers whom they represented to a position totally divorced from that of the struggling mass below.' (F Williams: *Magnificent Journey – The Rise of the Trade Unions*, p105)

Later on, Williams cites the opposi-



The Chartist Newport Uprising 1839

tion of the skilled unions to the eight-hour day in the 1880s as an example of their 'cautious, conciliatory and self-satisfied' attitude (*Magnificent Journey*, p162). Corr and Brown ignore this, although perhaps more than any other question it showed how opposed the craft unions were to the interests of the mass of the working class. On the one hand there were the socialists, including Tom Mann, demanding legislation for the eight hour day. On the other stood the craft unions, opposing any state intervention on the question, arguing that it was a matter of negotiation with the employers. Given that they were the only negotiating bodies, it was tantamount to saying only skilled workers could have the eight-hour day. Engels was in the thick of this struggle, and when under the influence of the new unskilled unions, the old gang of the skilled unions were



Liberal Party supporters campaign for Dilke, 1874

defeated at the 1891 TUC, he spoke enthusiastically of the defeat of the 'bourgeois labour party':

'The old unions, with the textile workers at their head, and the whole of the reactionary party among the workers, had exerted all their strength towards overthrowing the eight-hour decision of 1890. They came to grief ... and the bourgeois papers recognised the defeat of the bourgeois labour party.' (*Engels, Letter to Sorge*, 14 September 1891)

Perhaps Engels was mistaken about their 'acceptance of the philosophy of capitalism'? Certainly Corr and Brown seem completely unaware of the major political battles of the time, when Tom Mann argued:

'New unionism must be judged by its fruits. Many identified with it had long been members of their own societies and had grieved bitterly over the workers' poverty, particularly that of the unskilled and unorganised, and at the cal-

both Marxism and the class struggle) in arguing that in Engels 'there was no definitive material theory of the labour aristocracy' (p45), it was certainly true that they produced no academic treatise on the matter. But Engels made pointed reference to England's monopoly position, as Corr and Brown concede earlier on in their article when they say that Engels was 'categorical' about the 'link between England's colonial monopoly and the corruption of a certain layer of the working class' (p43).

The liberal JA Hobson also made this connection at the turn of the century, and Lenin argued that by doing so, he showed himself more advanced than the so-called Marxist Kautsky. We would say that he was more advanced than Corr and Brown writing nearly a hundred years later. If we look at the sectors where skilled workers and their organisation were strongest, we find them to be closely connected to Empire: textiles, iron and steel, engineering, and coal. Textiles because of the cheap cotton from Egypt, and a captive market in India; iron and steel because of shipbuilding and railway exports, engineering because of the imperialist arms industry, and coal because of the demands of Britain's monopoly of world shipping. In a myriad of different ways, the conditions of the labour aristocracy were bound up with the maintenance of British imperialism. And this fact was bound to be reflected in their political standpoint.

To sum up: Corr and Brown show an amazing ignorance of the contemporary recognition of the existence of this privileged stratum; at each and every stage, they prefer to rely on bourgeois historians writing up to a century later. Their argument that 'in fact no new layer emerged which was materially and socially distinguishable from the rest of the working class in a way which was different from long established differentiation' (p67) is quite unsustainable in terms of all the contrary contemporary opinion. The point is that such a development within the working class was inevitable if the ruling class were to survive in conditions where the working class were becoming ever more preponderant numerically, and where there was a commensurate increase in their potential political and economic power. Furthermore the emergence of the labour aristocracy was linked with the maturation of bourgeois democracy: only at that point in time when the ruling class could be satisfied that the working class would use the vote 'wisely' would they in fact receive it. Marx and Engels were well aware of the significance of the treachery of the Reform League; Corr and Brown over a century later are not.

To be continued in next issue



LF: The impeachment was a significant victory for the Brazilian people; for the first time since the defeat of the military regime a mass movement, managed to fulfil its objectives. Immediately after impeachment, the vice-president who became president proceeded to form a centre-left government. For example, the former Mayor of Sao Paulo, a woman called Erundina from the left of the Workers Party, was made minister for public sector workers. This represented a break with the neo-liberal policies of President Collor.

After that, the government came under intense pressure, internally and externally. It gradually abandoned positions against the neo-liberal offensive. The decisive moment came with the nomination of a new finance minister linked to the centrist Party of Social Democracy. From then on there have been attempts to implement more stringent policies of cutting public expenditure, accelerating privatisation, etc. That nomination changed our party's position: we had given critical support for policies that reversed the previous neo-liberalism; this changed to opposition.

There has been a government move to revise the constitution. The constitution was drawn up in 1986-88. Although it didn't confront the fundamental problems of Brazil, it included progressive social rights and certain nationalist positions, for example guaranteeing Brazilian rights over mineral resources, which are important democratic positions. The government says this constitution is impractical, that it binds the government, that it can't carry out any correct economic policy because of it.

We are spearheading a broad movement against the revision of the constitution. At the same time conservative sectors are trying to alter the legislation on political organisation; they're inspired by the German model and are trying to establish a 5 per cent minimum of the national vote for parties to have seats in parliament, which would cancel our present representation of seven members. The second move is changing the system of proportional representation to a majority system. Some say, a mixed system, others a strict majority system as in Great Britain, which as you know is profoundly anti-democratic. These are moves to roll back democratic conquests achieved over the last decade.

**FRF: We hear a lot in Britain about the murder of street children, and the criminal role of the police in this regard. How important politically is this, or have people in Brazil become immune to it?**

No, it is politically and socially important. It reflects the crisis of our country. Literally thousands and thousands of children are on the streets, due not to neglect by their families but to the break up of families, resulting from the misery people are condemned to. What happens is that these children don't have the means to survive, so they usually get involved in petty crime, and shop owners hire off-duty police to exterminate them.

It is linked with another social crisis in parts of the cities, especially Rio. After the crackdown on drug traffickers in Columbia, they have diverted routes to Europe and the United States through Brazil, and particularly through Rio. The favelas on the mountains, with their strategic location, have been taken over by drug traffickers. Within the communities of the favelas there is a very acute division between that sector of the community which values work and the work ethic, and another sector of the community which sees that it is much more profitable to link itself to the drug trade, because a scout for a drug gang will earn in one day more than his father earns in a month as a worker. It also leads to intense conflict because most of these drug dealers are intimately linked with the police, who offer them pro-

# Crisis and resistance

In *Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!* 109 (September-November 1992) we carried an interview with Luis Fernandes, a member of the Central Committee of the Partido Comunista do Brazil (PCdoB) on the movement that was gathering to impeach Brazilian President Collor. Here Comrade Fernandes, interviewed by DAVID REED, CAT WIENER and TREVOR RAYNE, gives the views of his Party on developments since Collor's impeachment.



Twenty-one people were massacred near Rio on the night of 29 August. The military police are strongly believed to have been responsible.



Street children

tection, so there's widescale violence in the shanty towns. Just recently in Rio drug dealers ambushed four policemen who were extorting protection money from them; the battalion the police were from then went into the shanty town and killed 21 people, all of them workers out celebrating a Brazilian football victory.

**Is there any political development emerging within these favelas to resist the influence of the drug trade?** Yes, but it's a delicate situation. There are shanty town organisations, community organisations, and as a party we lead the national co-ordination of these organisations. But the problem is the drug dealers create another state, which furnishes even social services the Brazilian state doesn't provide; settling marital disputes, etc. It creates a very difficult situation for revolutionary organisation. For example to lead land occupations for landless families, within certain slum areas you have to get authorisation from the drug dealers, otherwise they'll kill you. It is a very tense situation and you have to know how to work within it.

**Are there any political developments emerging to resist the murder of street children?**

Movements are being organised, but because of the conditions of life these youngsters face, they are not prone to collective organisation. Typical solutions are individualistic: a lot of international charity organisations channel assistance programmes that don't address the political problem. You can solve the problem of a particular child, but you don't solve the struc-

tural problems launching thousands of children into the streets in the first place. That is the issue we focus upon, but it's also an issue where the right wing, fascist forces are involved because they play upon the insecurity that people have. They say 'These people have to be killed because they're no good for society.'

I want to say something else here. The press in Britain has given a lot of publicity to the massacre of the Yanomami Indians in August. That is not an isolated event; it is linked to a series of violations of human rights in Brazil and Venezuela. While we defend absolutely the Indians' right to existence, to preserve their way of life as they see fit, there is something else that worries our party. We think that behind the publicity that is given in developed capitalist countries to the plight of the Indians is a plan against the sovereignty of our country. The Amazon region is extremely rich, especially where the Yanomami reservation is, and we think that there are multinational interests wanting to exploit the natural resources in the region. Of course we demand an end to the executions, but we cannot accept any resolution or any move towards limiting the sovereignty of our country. In the United Nations there has been talk about treating the Indian question as a human rights problem that transcends sovereignty and gives the right of intervention. There have been very worrying developments recently where US armed forces have carried out military manoeuvres without warning the Brazilian or the Venezuelan governments, and in Guyana on the frontier with Brazil. They have never done military manoeuvres there before. This is not an alarmist position - we have a long history of interventions by the United States in Latin America.

**Could you say something about neo-liberalism, debt, privatisation, what impact it's having socially?**

In Brazil the neo-liberal project has not been able to consolidate itself as it has in Chile, Argentina or Mexico. The whole issue of the impeachment



Demonstration against privatisation

of Collor is a political expression of this. The problem is that Brazil has already acquired a diversified economic base, and it cannot be easily adapted within the international capitalist division of labour. It is different from Chile where you can specialise in certain industries, and concentrate on that. Brazil has considerable capitalist development in a number of sectors, either via multinationals, such as automobiles, or through state intervention, in telecommunications, oil, petroleum etc. This has caused problems. When the government tries to implement a policy it loses support. Sections of the Brazilian bourgeoisie say 'okay, we agree with neo-liberalism in general', but whenever any measure is taken that affects their interests they manoeuvre to block it. Where neo-liberalising has expressed itself more completely is in the privatisation of the previously nationalised steel production. Now they want to proceed into oil production, because that's a national monopoly in Brazil, and into telecommunications. There are also cuts in public spending, education, etc, and a reduction of trade barriers mounted to protect Brazilian industries from foreign competition.

Up till now progress on all of these fronts has been limited. That's why the government is under intense pressure. This all converges now in the move against the constitution.

**Where privatisation has taken place, what impact does it have on the workers in those areas?**

Initially massive lay-offs, in the name of increasing competitiveness.

Amongst the more specialised, bureaucratic sectors of the workforce there is active support for privatisation; they believe that privatisation can then get out of the crisis. These more corrupt sectors of the trade union movement, directly linked to enterprises, receive huge amounts of financial backing during union leadership elections, newspaper coverage, editorials supporting them because they're very 'sensible' people while the others are radicals and so on

**What working class opposition is there?**

Demonstrations, riots at the stock markets where privatisation deals were being settled, and political pressure through the left's elected representatives in Congress, depending on where the privatisation is.

**Can you tell us what policies the left is putting forward in the forthcoming elections, particularly the Workers Party?**

The elections will be in October 1994. They're very important because they are national elections for every single executive and legislative post in Brazil all the way up to President. So it is a very important election. At the moment there's a right wing candidate emerging, the present mayor of Sao Paulo, trying to polarise the right and extreme right forces in Brazil. On the left, there is Lula from the Workers Party, who went to the second round of the national election in 1989, and there is Leonor Brizola, an old populist. He tends to assume more nationalistic positions than the Workers Party and is clearer in criticisms of the neo-liberal offensive in Brazil.

The centre forces in Brazil, which are dominant in government, represented by two big parties, the Brazilian Democratic Movement and the Social Democratic Party of Brazil, have not yet generated a candidate with sufficient mass support to confront the polarisation between left and right that is emerging.

What we defend is the need for a programme structured on three basic pillars: first, defence of national sovereignty against the neo-liberal drive; second is defence of democratic rights and a clear position against moves to restrict rights of democratic representation; third is preservation of social rights, which are also under attack from the neo-liberal offensive. We think these positions should preside over a discussion of candidates. Within the Workers Party there has been a tendency to move increasingly towards the centre and abandon strong positions they had in the 1989 elections in relation to these three issues. The left has recently criticised this drift of the leadership, so that might produce a more combative stance from the Workers Party.

**Essentially you share the position that came from the Sao Paulo-Havana meeting, and which was also put forward by Castro, that in Latin America today socialism is not on the agenda, and therefore the left must unite to defeat neo-liberalism?**

Yes, it relates to our own experience of connecting revolutionary activity and revolutionary politics. In Brazil today, and in all of Latin America, the neo-liberal offensive represents a new imperialist offensive that has to be defeated. It is creating huge political, social, and economic conflicts. Therefore the way that revolutionaries and socialists can extend their influence is by presenting socialists as the staunchest adversaries of neo-liberalism's disastrous policies. So I wouldn't say so much that socialism isn't on the agenda but rather that we can bring socialism to the agenda by being extremely radical in our resistance to the neo-liberal offensive in Brazil and Latin America. That's the concrete way of bringing socialism onto the agenda for the broadest sections of the population of our country.



# Inside Belmarsh

Following Patrick Hayes' article in *FRFI* 114 we have continued to receive material from prisoners who have spent time in Belmarsh. We print here a selection.

## The Vulnerable Prisoners Unit

*Rosie C:* Cell association is not allowed in the VP unit for some reason but I'm quite sure it is allowed in the rest of the prison. As for the exercise yard, this is one hell of a danger to prisoners on the VP unit as it is between two of the main wings. Officers on the VP unit always appear to provoke some prisoners and when the prisoner has a go back, he gets taken to the segregation block. You can hear snide comments being made by certain staff. It never surprised me when applications went unanswered as I put one in a week after arriving and up until I left, I never even got a reply.

## The Category A unit

*Bruce Childs:* Governor Burbidge was renowned for his inability to give a straight answer and his inaccessibility to inmates. It once took me five days of applications to meet him and his favourite ploy was to see inmates at 4.30pm - by which time all office staff had gone home and no effective action could be taken until the following day.

As for 'turning prisoners away from discussing their crimes', I am completely mystified, how exactly did he achieve this state of affairs? Believe me, the man did nothing! He even refused to permit me to paint, in full view of his staff, a rocking horse destined for a disadvantaged family in the immediate locality. Further to this, when I requested I hold an instructional toy-making class to occupy Cat A prisoners and pass on to them the skills of making rather beautiful rocking horses, he abruptly told me 'No!'

*Laing:* Being an Open University student prior to my arrest, I decided to continue my studies. My first knock-back was discovering the Cat A Unit does not allow books to be handed in on a visit. The reason? 'A security risk.' I inquired about obtaining my books through the Education Department. To my surprise, on-

ly Art and English language classes were opened to Cat A inmates once a week. I was totally disillusioned and began to have my books posted in.

When the first package arrived, it was unceremoniously dumped on my bed unopened. I asked the duty officer if there had been a mistake. A quick investigation revealed it had been X-rayed, though its contents not censored. The same happened for the second and third parcels of books. Eventually I suggested I be allowed to hand in books to save on postage costs. All items handed in to Belmarsh are X-rayed and searched by officers - in the case of the Cat A Unit searches are repeated twice. My request was refused on the grounds of being a 'security risk'.

## The Segregation Unit

*Andrzej Jakubczyk:* The segregation unit is more oppressive than any dispersal I've been to (except perhaps Whitemoor which has quite a reputation for brutality). In many ways it's like a police 'lock-up'. Doors and cell hatches are not 'closed'; they are slammed! Prisoners are not permitted to pass any item onto other prisoners; not even a newspaper!

The strip cell and to a lesser degree the 'strong box' are in comparatively frequent use. In the six weeks I was there, there were eight incidents of prisoners being brought into segregation under so-called 'restraint' and located in strip cells. One of these, who was locked in a strip cell without any blankets or a jug of water, commenced banging on his cell door at 8pm only to be informed that the day staff had gone off duty and there were no staff to unlock him and he would have to wait until morning. He was told to 'stay off his door', or else. On recommencing banging his door, some ten minutes later, he was unlocked and forcibly removed to a 'strong-box' (special cell). They must have had some spare staff stored away in the cleaning cupboard for just such emergencies. ■

# More prisons to be privatised

On 2 September Home Secretary, Michael Howard, announced his plan for an immediate increase in private sector involvement in the running of prisons. A further ten gaols will be added to the two already in the private sector: three new prisons and seven existing ones.

The announcement followed hard on the heels of a leaked memorandum setting out the Home Secretary's thoughts on tightening up the 'lax' prison regimes in favour of a more 'austere' variety:

'The Home Secretary... is very concerned that... prisoners enjoy standards of comfort which many taxpayers would find hard to understand and which it is difficult to justify in the current expenditure climate.'

'[Mr Howard] inclines to the view that prisoners should spend more time working and less time on activities most people would regard as leisure... He does not think sporting activities undertaken purely for fun should be a prominent part of the custodial experience.'

The privatisation speech also 'leaked' out a few days early, in time to spur interested private companies to issue their own statements, asking for 30 gaols to be privatised, claiming this is the number which will create a 'financially viable private sector'. Howard has to resolve the contradiction between two central planks of Tory policy: cutting state spending and being seen to be ever 'tougher' on crime. Privatisation of as much of the prison service as possible is his main solution.

Howard's policies complete the process of abandoning the 'good intentions' of Kenneth Baker following the Strangeways protest of 1990 and the Woolf Inquiry report. But the last three years cannot be wiped out as easily as Howard might wish. Even Derek Lewis, Director General of the Prison Service, recognises this. Speaking in the wake of the protest which destroyed Wymott prison, he said:

'Now indeed we probably face a more volatile situation [than before Strangeways] because expectations among the prisoner population have been increased as a result of the Woolf report.'

Lewis' response to Wymott, however, will further increase both tension and overcrowding. He is creating new 'travelling adjudicators', able to impose up to 120 days loss of remission and 56 days in solitary on future protestors.

Prisoners do indeed have greater expectations and will continue to voice them, no matter what measures Howard and Lewis introduce in an attempt to silence them.

Nicki Jameson

## HMP WYMOTT

Wymott gaol was destroyed by a mass protest on 6 September. Damage was estimated at £20 million. The media were quick to blame 'drugs' and 'gangland culture'. Former prisoners describe quite different aspects.

Wymott was an industrial prison. Work was compulsory. Prisoners who did not work were fined 25p a day. The average wage was £2.75 a week. Aside from the domestic, catering and maintenance jobs, prisoners were compelled to work in one of two 'shops': the machine shop or the 'engineers'; the work in the first is sewing on an industrial machine, in the second it consists of putting screws in plugs. Prisoners worked seven hours a day. In addition, the food was particularly disgusting, inedible even, so the seven hours work was often done on an empty stomach.



Michael Howard, Home Secretary

## INSIDE NEWS

### Justice for Omasase!

On 10 August 50 people, including relatives of two prisoners who committed suicide there, attended a picket of Pentonville, called by Anarchist Black Cross to commemorate Prisoners' Justice Day. Just two weeks earlier an inquest jury finally reached the verdict that Omasase Lumumba was unlawfully killed by prison officers in Pentonville. A previous jury was told by the coroner it could not reach a verdict of unlawful killing but a successful appeal by the dead man's family, aided by Inquest, overturned that instruction. It still remains to be seen whether any of the unlawful killers will be prosecuted.

Other Prisoners' Justice Day pickets were held at Winson Green and Armley.



### Free the M25 Three!

On 29 June the Court of Appeal rejected the appeals of Raphael Rowe, Michael Davis and Randolph Johnson. The relatives of the M25 Three are continuing to campaign for the case to be reopened. They can be contacted at 75 Scylla Road, London SE15, 071 732 2578. ■

### Prisoners' Advice Service

The Prisoners' Advice Service has recently moved to a new address: 57 Chalton Street, London NW1; 071 388 8586. PAS takes up prisoners' complaints about treatment in prison (not appeals against sentence or conviction) and is highly recommended by prisoners who have used the service.

## POWs' birthdays

Vincent Donnelly, 274064, HMP Whitemore, Longhill Road, March PE15 0PR 25 Sept

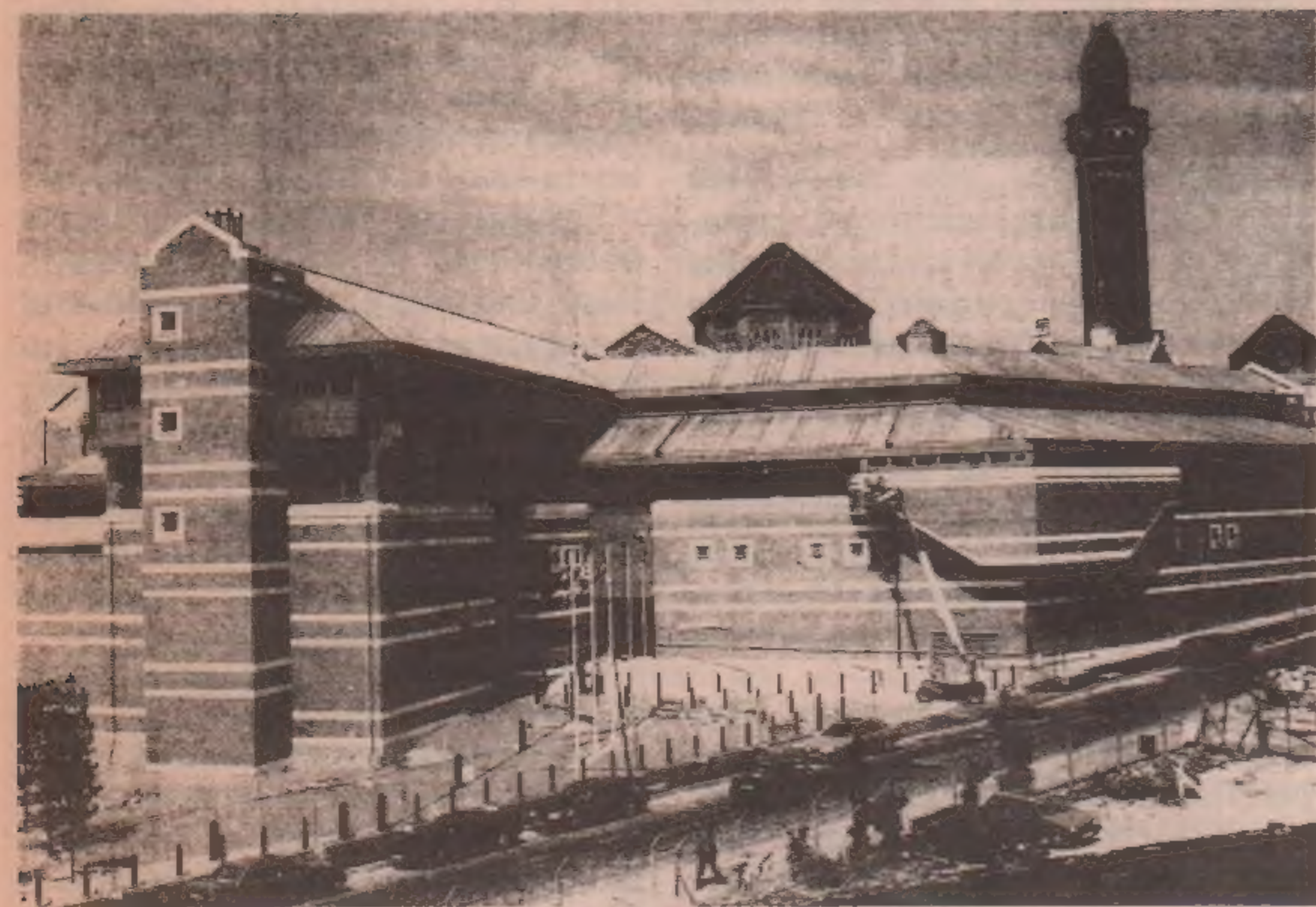
Harry Duggan, 338638, HMP Long Lartin, South Littleton, Evesham, Worcs WR11 5TZ, 31 Oct

Sean Kinsella, 758661, HMP Parkhurst, Newport, Isle of Wight PO30 5NX 5 Nov

Paul Norney, 863532, HMP Frankland, Fincham Avenue, Brasside, Durham DH1 5YD, 11 Nov

Brendan Dowd, 758662, HMP Long Lartin, 17 Nov

# Strangeways: the truth must be heard



Nicki Jameson and Eric Allison, who have followed and written about the Strangeways Prison uprising and its repercussions over the last three years, are researching a book for Larkin Publications, *Strangeways 1990: 25 days that shook the prison system*. Prisoners who would like to contribute accounts of events at Strangeways or any other gaol during the same period should write to us at the *FRFI* address. In order to facilitate publication, and ensure the widest possible distribution, we are also appealing to *FRFI* readers to send donations towards production costs.

This letter, recently received from David Bowen, expresses exactly why it is so vital that this book be produced and the prisoners' story be heard:

Dear *FRFI*

First can I thank you for being the only group to offer support to myself and others on trial in connection with the Strangeways riot. As you know, we didn't get a trial; what we did get was duress and hassle and beatings to the extent that myself and Mark Azopardi escaped from the escort and although Mark was caught, he again escaped with others from the Crown Court.

When you start a trial and get told you will be convicted because the judge will see to it, it is hard to understand how they can do this without evidence. I was in for shoplifting at the time of the riot. And I was on remand in the prison - the riot started on the conviction side of the jail and the two sides never meet. I found it hard to understand how the Crown could say I was involved in a conspiracy to riot when I didn't even know until my cell door was opened that any riot was to take place. But my barrister said they could say you flew around in the helicopter throwing slates, this judge would let the jury hear it... So after being attacked, like other defendants had been, I escaped and intend to plead not guilty to escape.

I also face another trial where my-

self and Paul Taylor have been charged with an attempt to nobble the jury by having the criminal records of sex offenders (who were attacked, though not by me) put through the jury's letter boxes with a letter to the jury's conscience. Paul Taylor pleaded guilty; I pleaded not guilty as I knew nothing of this attempt. But it seems when they go out to get you, they do it big and now I'm looking at life in prison, as I got a nine year sentence for the riot plus whatever I get for the other charges and, if the last trial is anything to go by, they will have no problem convicting me as innocence and guilt play no part when the system goes out to get you.

I feel very bitter at the so-called pressure groups who didn't lift a finger to help us and draw attention to the mockery going on with our trial. And I expect no help once again from them when I go up on the other charges. You, however, did support us and I'd like to say thanks for that.

Yours in the struggle  
David Bowen, Garth Prison

Ian Allen was the last person to be tried for his part in the Strangeways uprising. He was convicted of conspiracy to commit GBH and sentenced to 30 months imprisonment. ■



## Lives of love and hope: a herstory

■ **Valley of Words** (1992) and **Lives of Love and Hope: a Herstory** (1993), by students at Earl Marshal School, Sheffield. Published by SUMES and Earl Marshal school. To obtain copies contact the school at Earl Marshal Road, Sheffield S4 8LA, tel: 0742 439391

If you need convincing that a revolutionary spirit is alive and well among young people, then read these books.

*Valley of Words* is a collection of poems in which the young writers describe their own struggles against racism and their solidarity with the struggles of the people in Palestine, South Africa, Kurdistan and Iraq. Their message is fearless and compassionate, the language stark and direct.

Speak up, speak up, don't be scared!

Shout loud don't be sad!

Be proud.

This is your language.

Make them hear and feel and fear.

Make them feel what you are feeling. Don't be afraid, I am here.

Jameela Musaid

Okay, sometimes the rhymes are a bit corny, but there is no doubting the sentiment.

They want to rule what is not theirs. They make excuses and support millionaires.

Solidarity is the way we should live today.

And together as one we should stand up for our say.

Mohammed Kassim



We hear these young people coming to understand from their own experience the roots of oppression and the links between racism and imperialism. For instance, in 'The Gulf War at Home', Asma Bibi describes racist attacks in her neighbourhood. She realises only too well how the attacks have been provoked by media attitudes to the war, to Saddam, and by implication to all black people.

In *Lives of Love and Hope* students describe the lives of their mothers, sisters and grandmothers ('herstories', as they call them), collected as part of an oral history project.

There is a fictional section but the best writing is that based on the women's own experiences. The reader is thrust into the heart of working class life: the struggles for employment, decent housing, health and education.

Many of the families described have come from Somalia, Yemen, Pakistan, Syria, Bangladesh and the Caribbean, and their accounts contain graphic descriptions of their struggles against imperialist forces and reactionary regimes in their countries and against racism here.

Safa's mother was married at 13 to her 16-year-old husband who had been blinded fighting British forces in Aden. In describing her 'confused, trapped and terrified life' with a husband who constantly beat her, Sofia Begum still finds time to express concern for injustice outside her home. Describing racist attacks in Southall and the involvement of the police, Sofia says 'Once an Asian man was beaten badly by a gang of white thugs. When the police arrived at his home, one of the police officers commented, "Sorry, but you're just in the wrong place."'

As the cover notes point out, *Lives of Love and Hope* 'shows there is a curriculum on our doorstep in the lives, experiences and achievements of our own international working class communities.' The challenge for any teacher who cares for the future of the working class youth is to make space for that curriculum.

Jim Craven

## Know your enemy

■ **Rage Against the Machine** Sony Music Entertainment, available on CD and cassette on the Epic label

When an American rock band credit Huey Newton and Bobby Sands for inspiration on their debut album, and use the photograph of a Buddhist monk on fire protesting against US interference in Vietnam for its cover, you might think there wouldn't be much interest. But *Rage against the Machine*'s self-titled debut album released earlier this year is still one of the top selling albums of 1993.

*Rage against the Machine*'s politics do not end on the cover; the music is full of the politics of the oppressed. The band members' different ethnic backgrounds and their collective experience has led to some hard-hitting politics. The main forces behind this are Tom Morello (guitarist), whose father was a Mau Mau fighter and Zach de la Rocha (vocalist), whose Chicano father was a political activist in the 1970s.

The album is a cocktail of punk, metal, hip-hop and rap music, its audience both black and white youth. The lyrics depict life for the oppressed, a struggle against ruling class ideology and a call for action. The main thrust is against the racism of

the state and its treatment of anyone who opposes its viewpoint: 'You know they went after King/when he spoke out on Vietnam/He turned the power to the have-nots/and then came the shot...' ('Wake Up')

Unlike a lot of 'protest' bands who look to the social democrats to bring change, *Rage against the Machine* don't share these illusions: 'What? The Land of the Free?/Whoever told you that is your enemy.' ('Know your enemy') In a recent interview Tom Morello said 'America is the land of the free to a certain extent. Some people are free to choose Lamborghinis and Porsches, and some people are free to choose what dumpster they are going to have their meal out of...'

Having discarded the social democratic way, they are left to follow the path of Zach de la Rocha's hero, Che Guevara and Revolution. Having realised the imperialist nature of the world, 'A yellow ribbon instead of a swastika, nothin' proper about ya propaganda', they link their fight with those fighting imperialism:

'This is a stick-up  
Our freedom or your life  
I wish I could be peaceful  
But there can be no sequel

New freedom must be fundamental  
In Johannesburg or South Central  
On the mic, 'cause someone should tell 'em  
To kick in the Township Rebellion

'Township Rebellion'

The band are not naive enough to think that they can change the world with their music; they say they just want the people who listen to their music 'to think critically'.

*Rage against the Machine* are not the only band against the system; many bands from different music backgrounds have progressive songs and led the way for *Rage against the Machine*, but now they have some catching up to do.

You might not like the music or style of the youth today, but when sections listen to such progressive music they shouldn't be ignored.

David Howarth



## Held without trial

■ **Detained without trial: a survey of Immigration Act detention**, Mark Ashford. Published by Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants, 1993. Price £4.99

'An asylum seeker does not expect to find himself imprisoned, especially in England, a country of asylum. I am a refugee. I fled from dictatorship and met the same treatment here.'

Patrice

In Britain every year more than 10,000 people are imprisoned, in detention centres, gaols and police cells without charge or trial. There is no right to apply for bail. No one is told how long they are to remain in custody.

Mark Ashford has assembled an up-to-date and comprehensive survey of how the Home Office uses Immigration Act powers to deter, control and harass black people and asylum seekers.

Detention under Britain's immigration laws is the fate for many people who seek to enter the UK. This may be for several hours or a few days for a person coming for a holiday or family occasion. Asylum seekers fleeing oppression and torture may be held for months while their case is under consideration. Others may have been living in the UK for years.

The 1971 Immigration Act gives both criminal and administrative powers to the police and immigration service. In practice it is only the administrative sanctions that are commonly used as this means that normal legal processes do not apply and the Home Office does not have to justify

any detentions in any public forum.

The book details how the large-scale detention of asylum seekers has been consistent government policy, along with the use of visa controls and legal sanctions on airlines, to deter people coming to the UK. When there has been an increase in asylum claims from particular nationalities, the state has carried out mass detentions. This was the experience of Tamils in 1985-87, Kurds from Turkey in 1989 and Zaireans in 1989-91.

For many asylum seekers, already traumatised by torture, imprisonment and loss, a further period of detention and isolation can have appalling consequences. Asylum seekers have been held in solitary confinement; medical and psychological care is often totally inadequate or absent. Since 1987 four asylum seekers have committed suicide and many others have attempted to do so.

The major force behind protests against immigration detention has been the detainees themselves. From sit-down protests and demonstrations to hunger strikes, they have mounted challenges to delays in settling cases, harassment by prison officers and in many cases the use of detention itself. What is striking about all the protests described in the book is the victories achieved by the prisoners, through their courage and their unity, often built across nationality.

Given that the government is planning an expansion of places for detention with the Asylum Bill becoming law, this book provides important material for all anti-racist campaigners.

Bill Bolton

## Rehabilitating Africa

We continue our occasional series of reviews of classic texts that should be read and re-read by communists and anti-imperialists everywhere.

■ **How Europe Underdeveloped Africa**, Walter Rodney. Published by Heinemann Kenya, 1993 (first published 1971). Available from Larkin Publications, price £5.95

*How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* is a refreshing remedy against the patronising, ruling class view of Africa as stagnant, over-populated and dependent on capitalist charity.

More importantly, it unmasks the pseudo-socialists, who peddle confusion by denying the potential of African people, with their dogmatic idea that Africa cannot play as progressive a role in history as the more industrialised oppressed people of the imperialist countries.

Rodney sets out passionately and clearly the story of Europe's plunder and division of the African continent and its people, exploring European encounters with Africa through trade, especially the slave trade, colonialism and capitalism/imperialism, and showing how these arrested or warped the ongoing process of African development in agriculture and manufacture; African cotton manufacture, for example, was killed by British trade.

The slave trade itself had emptied vast areas of Africa of its people, and under colonialism the colonial state was mobilised to promote the interests of European capitalism to the detriment of Africa and the African.

Racism was also a means of uniting the capitalists and demoralising the resisters, in turn, by the brutal barbarism of the European encounter, fostering and inducing the slave mentality that ensures docility, with the aim of driving the dispossessed into reservations or compounds, plantations and mines.

For three centuries it was the major vehicle of primary accumulation that raised Europe to that wealth and power which thereafter enabled it to draw the world into the imperialist system.

Rodney argued fiercely that Africa's freedom and development will only be possible with a decisive break from the international capitalist system. He made it clear that replacing the white colonial ruler with black neo-liberal puppets offered no way forward in the liberation struggle; he emphasised that nominal independence can only help the elite, not the masses. Above all he stressed that nationalist anti-colonial movements, without genuine socialist programmes, will always end up in blind alleys.

Walter Rodney has achieved nothing short of the rehabilitation of African history, and added to the ideological arsenal of the struggle for African liberation. Who would guess from the negative assessments of the left and right of the so-called first world, that Africa and the developing world are the main forces hammering world capitalism today? Great hunger has bred great determination in the anti-imperialist fight.

Ken Sterling

## After Allende's fall

■ **The Latin American Left: From the Fall of Allende to Perestroika**, edited by Barry Carr and Steve Ellner. Published by Westview Press/Latin America Bureau, 1993, £12.99.

On a factual level, this book provides a broad and informative overview of the different organisations and trends within the Latin American left over the past twenty years, with interesting discussions on, for example, the guerrilla struggle since the 1980s. However, the authors' tendency to a social democratic perspective, with an emphasis on political pluralism, women's and environmental groups etc, mars their analysis of the effects of perestroika on the revolutionary movements in Latin America. This book is more an introduction to the spectrum of left organisations in Latin America than a cogent analysis of the rise of social democracy as the dominant political trend in the continent.

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EDITED BY EDDIE ABRAHAMS

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### FRFI PUBLIC MEETINGS

#### North London

**Racism, fascism and the working class**

Tuesday 19 October, 7.30pm

**Palestine: the great betrayal**

Tuesday 2 November, 7.30pm

Both at the Greenland Neighbourhood Centre, Greenland Road, Camden (Camden Town tube)

#### South London

**The fight against racism and fascism**

Wednesday 20 October, 7.30pm

**Palestine: the great betrayal**

Wednesday 3 November, 7.30pm

Both above the Walmer Castle Pub, Peckham Road, London SE15 (opposite BP petrol station)

#### Blackburn

**The fight against racism, the rise of fascism**

Sunday 31 October, 2.30pm

Bangor Street Community Centre, Brookhouse, Blackburn

For details of any of these meetings, tel: 071 837 1688

### FRFI Social Evening

Food, music, licensed bar. Political conversation in a relaxed atmosphere.

**Saturday 9 October  
8pm till late**

Locomotive Pub, Jamestown Rd, London NW1 (nearest tube Camden Town) £4 waged £2 unwaged (includes food)

## LETTERS

write to FRFI BCM Box 5909 London WC1N 3XX

## On the question of escape

I would like to respond to some of the points raised in the Reply to John Bowden. Firstly, the difference between a reformist and a revolutionary opposition to prison conditions... cannot lie simply in the question of whether it is the task of external reformers or prisoners themselves to wage the struggle against prison brutality and oppression. Naturally, our answer must be the latter and we must see our role in this as supporting that struggle whatever form it takes. But are we opposed to brutal, oppressive prisons or are we opposed to prisons? It is surely the communist position that the prison system, along with the police and other state repressive machinery, is unreformable and must be smashed.

I do not think that it is every prisoner's duty to escape. But I do believe it is their right, not only to 'want to escape', but actually to do so. I would not have written 'We support unreservedly the act of escaping from capitalist prisons,' but I certainly would say that 'We refuse to condemn any prisoner who escapes from a capitalist prison.'... When the hypothetical racist of the Reply escapes we certainly won't support him but what will we do? Demand an inquiry into the lax security which permitted it? Let's face it, how many racists ever get gaoled for their crimes anyway? And were our hypothetical escapee to be Dennis Nilsen... we would not be applauding, but nor would we be condemning him for the act of escaping and lining up with the gutter press to scream 'outrage' and rehearse the details of his murders yet again.

But the main reason I take issue with the Reply is that it puts escape, 'an individual solution – and we would not blame prisoners for taking that opportunity' and 'political organisation of prisoners to oppose the conditions of their incarceration' in opposition to one another. This is not necessarily the case. Many

escapes from prison are an inspiring and vital component in that very struggle. The British government is still tied in knots over the effects of the 'Great Escape' from the Maze... When five Strangeways prisoners broke out from the court cells... their motive may well have been the desire to see their families before the inevitable retribution...; the effect, however, was that the hitherto ignorant British public was forced at least to acknowledge the trial was taking place...

Prisoners may escape because they, personally, have had enough or because they consciously want to highlight the oppressiveness of the system. Or it may be a combination of both. As communists, the personal feelings of the individuals involved are not the main issue; what matters is whether their actions weaken or strengthen the system. In the overwhelming majority of cases escapes, particularly mass ones, weaken the system. Escape, like writing letters, smashing cells, organising debates, standing on roofs, is one of the range of weapons prisoners have at their disposal... Escaping from gaol is neither the only form of opposition to the system nor is it something that can be separated from that opposition.

NICKI JAMESON

I read your response to John Bowden... in which you attempt to justify your position that escape from the enemy gulag archipelago is not always appropriate. I disagree.

You acknowledge that the 'entire criminal justice system has a class purpose'. Since we are involved in class war and the 'criminal justice' apparatus is owned and operated by the ruling class, all prisoners are in some respect prisoners of war. The first duty of the PoW is to escape. The second is to harass the enemy... The act of escape itself constitutes serious harassment because it undermines the authority of the dictatorship of the

bourgeoisie and its apparatus of repression. It exposes them as less capable of exerting their will and fulfilling their propaganda purpose of protecting the public.

Next, you acknowledge that conditions in British prisons are atrocious. The same is true in the US... To the extent that a few people may come out of prison better off than when they went in, it is in spite of rather than because of the conditions. Everyone has not only a right but an obligation to resist his or her own oppression; if everyone were willing to do so, revolution would be much easier, perhaps unnecessary. That right and obligation is not diminished by a person's bad acts: a person with bad practice is not obliged to refrain from good practice... but to change the anti-social attitudes that resulted in criminal behaviour.

Prisons do not change such attitudes, they only aggravate them or decrease the extent to which those who can transcend them do so. Since virtually all prisoners are eventually released, it is in the community's interest to have them back before they are subjected to damaging and deranging abuse that will make them significantly greater threats to the community...

You rightly point out that the most oppressed segments of society are also the most victimised by crime. Your apparent implication is that the escape of nasty prisoners in itself victimises these people. Such a view is not consistent with your apparent denigration of deliberate punishment as a legitimate penological objective. Escape does not victimise. What victimises is the bad acts that may be perpetrated by escapees... and to which escapees may be pressurised by lack of support. Hence, the appropriate response is to resist crime – be it individual or mass exploitation and oppression – rather than escape. That can be done by appropriate organising to develop the mechanisms to deal with crime

within the community.

Denying the right and duty of prisoners to escape the gulag archipelago is equivalent to saying it is good and proper for those people to be there. Doing so concedes legitimacy to the apparatus of repression... It is always the task of revolutionaries to deny the legitimacy of bourgeois political authority... How can we create free zones if the people feel they have to welcome occupying armies of police into their (own) communities? No, we have to organise to protect our communities from the depredations not only of the ruling class and its henchpeople but also and especially of unconscious elements of our own class. Without state power, we may sometimes have to resort to draconian measures to accomplish this, but accomplish it we must. In many cases, we can do so more readily and more progressively than the swine (police) because we have entré where they don't.

Also in the realm of ceding authority to the bourgeois state is the abdication of our responsibility to define what is crime, inherent in denying the legitimacy of escape. Saying some prisoners are too nasty to escape implies their arrests, convictions, sentences and even treatment are all okay, or at least justified and thus legitimate. Such recognition confers legitimacy laterally on the courts and other parts of the apparatus...

BILL DUNNE, US PRISONER

The debate with John Bowden... is welcome to all of us involved in prison solidarity. So it seems strange that a paper like FRFI, with its record of solidarity, should take the extraordinary action of removing key pieces from John's argument, and then, try to justify this gross act of rudeness against a long time fighter and regular contributor to your paper, with an argument that had more to do with the *Daily Mail* than Karl Marx.

Firstly you say, 'we do support

actions by prisoners which challenge the conditions under which they are held.' The conditions in which prisoners are held are quite irrelevant to their need for political activity. Prisoners are held by their class enemies, by armed force. En suite toilets and ping pong tables will not alleviate that condition. Of course political organisation and action by prisoners is a crucial part of revolutionary struggle. Defying the strength of the state by escaping and helping escapees is part of that struggle, and not a distraction from it. John Bowden's self-empowered parole was a boost for all in prison.

Now we come to the most disturbing aspect of your argument... social consequences of crime and the anti-social offender. Do you really believe the working class derives some benefit from having its young people taken away by force and induced into an atmosphere of oppression and violence, then returned damaged after wasted years, back into the same hopelessness and poverty they came from?

Prison is a weapon in the class war. It hurts those it touches. As for the Criminal Justice system protecting us from racist thugs – tell that to Joy Gardner's family. Tell that to Stephen Lawrence's family. The Nazi thugs are only a sideshow compared to the daily racist attacks carried out in the uniforms of the British state.

Your argument that we should support the imprisonment of some of the mentally ill or social disturbed minority, is a clear echo of the righteous right. Locking up such people is no solution for them, nor us.

... Your argument that somehow prisoners are obliged to 'stay and fight' may sound good in the Locomotive, but rings hollow when the beer fades. It is sanctimonious, insulting, and ignorant, and is beneath any grouping who claims the title 'revolutionary'...  
RICKIE MAGUIRE

## The Unilever bequest!

Trevor Rayne's detailed exposé of the multinational power of Unilever has a particular resonance for the Rahman Family Defence Campaign in Bolton – our weekly meetings are held in the house which was the birthplace of William Hesketh Lever! Now owned by an independent group of local people, the Socialist Club is home for a number of organisations – the Bolton Unemployed Workers Centre, the Trades Council and groups supporting the struggle for Irish liberation, to name a few.

A slogan used by black people in Britain – 'We're here because you were there' – has particular relevance then; the trading empire founded by the Bolton grocer Lever followed the imperial flag over Africa and Asia enchainning millions into the net of economic domination that clearly still survives today.

In campaigning against racist immigration controls and for the right of all black people to stay in Britain we cannot be separate from the wider anti-imperialist struggle against the legacy of Lever and his like.

RAHMAN FAMILY DEFENCE CAMPAIGN  
Bolton, Lancashire

### Apology

In the last issue of FRFI we printed a letter from Raymond Gilbert, about the case which led to his imprisonment and that of John Kamara. We have since been informed by Mr Kamara and his family that the letter was inaccurate in several respects and led the reader to believe that the two men's situations were identical. Both were convicted of the same robbery. Raymond Gilbert pleaded guilty at the trial but has subsequently declared his innocence. John Kamara never made any confession, pleaded not guilty and has always maintained his innocence. His case has been taken up by the organisation Justice. We published Raymond Gilbert's letter in good faith and apologise for any distress which it has caused.



and imprisoned. The victims do not regard Nazi thugs as a sideshow, as does Maguire. Stephen Lawrence's family were particularly angry when charges were dropped against men involved in his murder. The black youth in the East End want to be free from the threat of racist assault – they want equality before the law as a right. They know that the denial of equality is state racism. As communists we know that the imprisonment of a few racists will not solve the problem of racism, but black people are absolutely correct to demand that racist attackers are prosecuted and to regard their imprisonment as a victory.

It doesn't help to argue that few racists are imprisoned, as does Jameson; that is an obvious result of the British racist state on which neither we nor the black community need to be lectured. But if the pressure of struggle in the East End or the campaign for Joy Gardner result in the imprisonment of racist thugs, in or out of uniform, then we will celebrate along with every other class

conscious fighter. Imprisoned racist thugs are not our prisoners of war, their capture is a victory wrested from our racist bourgeois rulers.

We do not want the struggle to stop there – we are communists not reformists or liberals. We believe that the working class and oppressed become class conscious through the struggles they are engaged in, not

through abstract demands unrelated to today's conditions. Lenin's grasp of this was key to the October Revolution. We cannot hope to change anyone's consciousness if we are ten steps ahead of their struggle.

Dunne may be correct that racists and other anti-working class criminals are suffering from false consciousness, but he is wrong to suggest that working class communities are, here and now, able to dispense real justice. When the working class has built its own democratic organisations, such as the Black Panther Party for instance, then this becomes both possible and preferable to bogus bourgeois justice. Such organisations cannot be wished into existence. Without them the working class itself becomes prey to the sort of vigilantism we have recently witnessed. This has nothing to do with working class justice.

We are not opposed to prison escapes and we do not separate the escape tactic from the struggle against prison conditions. We did not say that all prison escapes are individual

solutions. We have recognised in FRFI's coverage of the prison struggle that there is a connection between political struggle and the very effective tactic of escape. It is interesting to note that Jameson's examples are of this character – the mass escape from the Maze and the Strangeways prisoners. They gave a great boost to the struggle precisely because they were effected for a political purpose. Irish prisoners are prisoners of war with both a right and a duty – imposed by their political struggle – to escape. The Strangeways prisoners were engaged in a struggle about prison conditions and did use their escapes for political purposes.

We do not believe that any prisoner should suffer brutal conditions and we are prepared to support any tactic in the struggle against such conditions. But that does not equate with a right or duty for all prisoners to escape. Maguire claims that we support the imprisonment of the 'mentally ill and socially disturbed minority'. We certainly do not, but if this category encompasses the real possibility of murder or serious harm to the oppressed, then they also have a right to protection – real protection, not a fantasy. The British government's recent policy of 'release into the community' for mentally ill patients is callous both towards these patients and towards anyone harmed as a result. Yes, most mental hospitals are oppressive and brutal. Yes, 'insanity' is a political question. But 'release' into the non-existent community – often to be the burden of individual female relatives – is progress for no one.

Our correspondents are playing the same game. The simple announcement that the 'prison system must be smashed' is empty rhetoric if it is put forward outside the context of a working class alternative to the bourgeois justice system. That alternative must be built out of the struggle. And it is that struggle, both in and out of prison, that the RCG has supported for the last 20 years. You can be sure we will continue.



# EAST END YOUTH FIGHT BACK

**18 September: a Bangladeshi youth is savagely beaten up by racists • police attack and arrest youth on protest vigil • BNP members rampage through Brick Lane while police disappear • 15 September fascist BNP candidate Derek Beackon is elected on the Isle of Dogs • 19 September Bangladeshi youth drive fascists out of Brick Lane**

## The fightback begins

On Friday 10 September, members of the RCG and City of London Anti-Apartheid Group attended the rally at the London Hospital, Whitechapel, called by the Quddus Ali Family Support Committee. Quddus Ali, a young Bengali, lay fighting for his life in intensive care at the hospital; the latest victim of racist attacks in the East End of London. On 8 September, as he and three friends walked down Commercial Road, they were attacked by at least eight white men and one woman. Three of the Asian youth escaped; Quddus Ali was repeatedly beaten and kicked, then left for dead.

When we arrived at the rally at 6pm, a large crowd, the majority of them Asian youth, had gathered on the pavement to listen to speeches by community and political groups. The anger of the youth was apparent as they chanted 'Racists off our streets' with raised fists. The crowd grew rapidly and the police presence, at first minimal, also grew as they tried to move people onto the pavement. At the other end of the rally the police provoked an angry response from the crowd. It was clear that a section of the rally was under attack. Immediately placards were thrown

in fury into the road at a police force which has consistently failed to prevent racist attacks or arrest the

racists, but which is only too ready to insult and harass the Asian community.

Repeated attacks by the police were repulsed, and the police were forced to withdraw about 100 yards up the road. Abandoned police vehi-

cles also came under attack from sticks and bricks. But within minutes the riot squads and dog-handlers had emerged from their hiding places and began to push the crowd back. The youth regrouped several times to defend themselves, but police snatch squads began the arrests. The organisers repeatedly attempted to stop the youth, calling them back to the rally, telling them it was enough. The youth were contemptuous of these appeals: it was not enough, the racist attacks and police collusion had to be challenged.

In a last attempt to control the situation, the organisers called an impromptu demonstration to the police station where the arrested youth had been taken. As a result the police were able to steer the demonstrators away from the main road, which had been completely blocked, into the back streets around Brick Lane. As we walked at the end of the march, we witnessed racist abuse from riot police; several young Asians standing in doorways were dragged out and told to follow the march. Police dogs were then brought up to snap and snarl at their heels. Later it was reported that a 10-year-old Bengali boy had been hospitalised after police beat him with truncheons. In the back streets, the riot police surrounded the demonstrators and continued with snatch

squad arrests and beatings.

The press described these events as a race riot. It was no such thing. While the police and local pubs and businesses run by racists had their windows smashed, there was no hostility directed at white people who took part in the rally and march. There is only one type of racism in the East End, and it is directed by white racists, fostered by racist political parties, including Tories, Labour and Liberals, towards the black community. The events of 10 September were only the beginning. The black youth have now taken up the fightback against racism with militancy and anger.

Carol Brickley



The Tower Hamlets Nine Defence Committee has been formed to defend the nine arrested on 10 September. A spokesperson for the campaign said that they will 'take any steps necessary to protect ourselves from further racist and police attacks. We furthermore demand that those responsible for the attack on Quddus and the attack on our community are immediately brought to justice.' Further information from: Youth Connection, 071-247 3242 ext 320 (9am-4pm) or 081 836 5874 evenings.

The Quddus Ali Family Support Committee can be contacted on 071-247 8779.

19 September

## 'We shouldn't have to hide'

Sunday, 19 September; Whitechapel. The school sports hall is packed. Over a thousand Asian youth and men compete with television crews for space. Everybody knows of the clashes earlier in the day between the BNP and anti-fascists in Brick Lane, with 33 arrests. The elders of the Bangladeshi Welfare Association have assembled a platform of worthies. One of the committee gets massive applause saying self defence is no offence. The first speech comes from Kosru Miah of Youth Connection. Ever since Quddus Ali's stabbing there has been more harassment from the police, he says. All the youth arrested outside London Hospital should be released. 'The youth are on the frontline and we will defend ourselves. We ask for solidarity from anti-racists.' Kosru announces the youth are organising a demonstration and need backing from the elders so that they are not isolated. He asks for a statement of support from the platform.

The Liberal leader of Tower Hamlets council gets up to speak; there is uproar, shouts of 'racist!' In the end the chair subdues the angry audience. A Labour councillor denounces the BNP, the Bishop of Stepney commends a decent police inspector, a BWA elder holds up his UK passport for the cameras. Speech after speech, and the focus is slipping away from the youth and how to organise the fightback.

Then come the MPs, Malcolm Bruce (Lib-Dem) and three Labour who gleefully sledge the Liberals, meanwhile protesting that this is not a party political issue. Joan Ruddock calls on the Tory government to strengthen laws against racist attacks. Keith Vaz calls on the Attorney General to remove the Isle of Dogs new councillor from office. Paul Boateng calls on the police to protect the black community. The most radical flowing of words ... but hang on a minute, where is the commitment to stand by the youth?

The meeting is coming to an end. Just as the MPs and worthies are shaking hands and bidding each other farewell on a job well done, one of the youth bursts his way up to the microphone. 'Everyone has made fine speeches about the past, the question is what do we do now?' He calls on the youth to stand up and fight, and ... but the microphone is switched off mid-sentence. The MPs are now scurrying to get away fast.

Coming down from the platform the young militant finishes his point, 'The law has had its chance - all that happened was Stephen Lawrence got killed. Now nine youth have been arrested. We have to be prepared to fight if necessary. You can forget what the councillors were saying. The youth should unite and fight for our rights, we shouldn't have to hide'.

Andy Higginbottom

## Interview with Youth Connection

Youth Connection, a broad alliance of some 30 Bangladeshi youth organisations in Tower Hamlets, is playing a central role in response to racist attacks and racist policing. It has initiated a defence campaign for those recently arrested. Youth Connection organiser Kosru Miah spoke to HANNAH CALLER and CAT WIENER.

'Friday night started off as a peaceful vigil. Obviously, the youth were angry, something had happened to one of their brothers. The police should have realised that. In fact they provoked an incident: little kids were flicking screwed up leaflets and the police tried to grab one of them. People didn't know what was going on, and pulled him back. There was some pushing and shoving, the copper fell on the ground, so all the other officers charged in. It just escalated from there.'

The police response was diabolical. The demonstrators were mainly young kids. They still brought in riot squads who aimed truncheon blows at the demonstrators. And then the dogs came in. One of my nephews, 12 years old, got bitten, and had to be taken to hospital.'

For the next 24 hours the area was saturated with police. But when the following night BNP supporters rampaged through Brick Lane, smashing shops and restaurants, the police mysteriously vanished.

'It looked to us as though the police were in alliance with the BNP. All day and all night, there was high-profile policing, with riot vans

going past every two minutes. All of a sudden the police stopped going round. That's when the BNP came, all the way down Brick Lane. As soon as they'd gone, the cops came back. They didn't arrest any BNP members, but they arrested one of us.'

The police treat us like dirt. If you're in a group, they want to search you - why are you in a group? where are you going? It's like you're not allowed to walk around with friends or anything. If more than two of you are in a car, you get stopped and searched automatically.

The attack on Quddus Ali has actually made it worse; even though we're the victims the police treat us like the criminals. We walk down the street together, because now we're scared to walk by ourselves, and then you get done for that.

Racism has always been there. But now people are beginning to fight back. The fascists are aware of that, so they start going for little kids and old men, because they're vulnerable. But something as bad as this attack, actually putting someone in hospital, hasn't happened in a while.

We've been walked over by racists and now we're walked over by police as well, so where do we go from here? We've got to make some kind of a stand. If we are attacked, we have every right to defend ourselves. That's true if you're black or white. We don't want to make a violent stand, but we have to make a united stand, and that is Youth Connection.'

Saturday 3 October

**Stop fascist attacks!**

**Drop the charges against the Tower Hamlets 9**

Join the Youth Connection march to defend the Tower Hamlets 9 and force the police to prosecute the fascists.

Assemble 10am  
Altam Ali Park, Whitechapel,  
(nr Aldgate East Tube)

**Saturday 16 October**

**Unity march to Close down the BNP HQ**

**Join the Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism! contingent**

**AGAINST RACISM AGAINST FASCISM AGAINST IMPERIALISM**

- Self defence is no offence
- Smash all immigration laws
- Against racist and fascist attacks

March assembles 1 pm  
Winns Common,  
Plumstead, London SE18  
For details of the FRFI contingent  
tel: 071 837 1688